

AFTER BELGOROD ATTACK,
RUSSIAN AIRSTRIKES
POUND KYIV **WORLD**



UP TO ₹12.5L REWARD
FOR INFO ON TERROR
ACTIVITIES **J&K**



PLENTY OF ROOM TO
BOOST MUSHROOM
CULTIVATION **INFOCUS**

INS VIKRANT GETS NEW
RADAR, MISSILE LAUNCH
PLATFORM **BACK PAGE**



THE TRIBUNE WISHES ITS READERS
A HAPPY NEW YEAR



WELCOMING 2024 Fireworks over Sydney Harbour during New Year celebrations on Sunday. AP/PTI

India ramps up security in Arabian Sea as US thwarts Houthi attack on vessel

AJAY BANERJEE
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31
On a day of fast-paced developments, a major shipping company suspended its operations for 48 hours through the Red Sea, US Navy helicopters downed two missiles after being attacked by Yemen-based Houthi rebels while the Indian Navy announced the formation of task groups comprising war-

DETOUR TO HIT TRADE

- If trade via Red Sea is restricted further, India's trade with Europe, US and western Africa will be hit
- Alternative route is via southern tip of Africa; takes extra 10 days for travel from India to Europe
- The longer route is bound to raise fuel and manpower costs

ships, planes and UAVs to protect the vital trade route. Yemen sits at the eastern

edge of the narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait, connecting the Arabian Sea with the Mediterranean Sea through the Suez Canal. If the trade through Red Sea is restricted further, India's business with Europe, US and western Africa could be impacted, raising fuel and manpower costs. The alternate route through the southern tip of Africa is 40 per cent longer,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

WEATHER

FORECAST



Dense fog
SUNRISE: 7.13 am
SUNSET: 5.35 pm

TEMPERATURE

DELHI
Max: 16°C Min: 11°C
GURUGRAM
Max: 18°C Min: 12°C
FARIDABAD
Max: 18°C Min: 11°C
NOIDA
Max: 17°C Min: 11°C

HELPLINE

Emergency response: 112
Women Helpline: 1091
Special cell (Northeast): 1093
Missing person: 1094
Vigilance: 1064
Senior citizens: 1291
Cyber complaints: 1930
Traffic issues: 1095



e-rickshaw driver hit by traffic cop's vehicle, dies

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31
A 42-year-old e-rickshaw driver died after he was allegedly hit by the vehicle of a Delhi Traffic Police personnel on Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Amit Jha, a resident of Sagarpur, while the police official has been identified as Mukesh Kumar (45). The incident occurred in the Mayapuri area of west Delhi. An eyewitness alleged that the police personnel was drunk.

DCP Vichitra Veer said, "A PCR call was received on Saturday morning at 8:30 at the Mayapuri police station regarding an accident, where an e-rickshaw driver was hit by a Maruti Swift car driven by Mukesh Kumar, a Delhi Police employee, who was currently posted with the traffic unit."

The police said the injured were taken to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital. However, Jha succumbed to injuries. The family and a group of e-rickshaw drivers protested outside the Mayapuri police station for not conducting a blood test.

The police said further investigation was underway but did not comment on whether the police official was drunk at the time of the incident and his arrest. However, they said that medical examination of the accused had been conducted. —TNS

He highlighted AAP's bro-

ken promises regarding the management of landfill sites. Despite Kejriwal's commitment to clearing three landfills within a year, the city saw the emergence of a new garbage dump at the Ghazipur landfill and the conversion of parts of Sanjay Van at Mehrauli into a new garbage dumping site.

He also described sanitation conditions as deplorable, with visible garbage dumps

lining the city's roadsides.

He said the pollution situation, primarily attributed to dust pollution, was underscored by an alarming Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded between 390 to 422 at different observation centers on December 31.

Sachdeva blamed poorly maintained PWD and MCD roads for the escalating dust pollution, emphasising that it

was a local factor.

On the final morning of 2023, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva visited the newspaper hawkers of Krishna Nagar and Patparganj in east Delhi and gave them warm clothes. Sachdeva highlighted the continued relevance of newspapers, especially in delivering local news even in an era dominated by digital news consumption.

INTER-STATE SUPPLY

The seized weapons included 348 countrymade pistols, 11 revolvers, 511 cartridges, seven magazines and six knives. A large number of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from UP, Rajasthan, Bihar, and MP

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

number of cases registered under the NDPS Act. As per the police data, a total of 338 persons were arrested against 267 cases registered under the NDPS Act since January 1. Large quantities of accused were involved in the supply of illegal arms from Uttar

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi-NCR region.

There has been a rise in the drug smuggling network in Gurugram as revealed by the increasing

Guest teachers seeking regular jobs cane-charged in Y'nagar

Union state president suffers head injuries | Others detained, freed later

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMBALA, DECEMBER 31

Guest teachers under the banner of Rajkiya Atithi Adhyapak Manch, who reached Yamunanagar to raise their long-pending demand of regularisation of their jobs and for a 'mahapada' (large sit-in) in front of the residence of the state Education Minister, were cane-charged on Sunday.

As per the information available, the guest teachers from various districts of Haryana had reached Yamunanagar. Earlier, they had gathered near a private palace but they were shifted to the grain market for dharna. They had planned to move towards the residence of Education Minister Kanwar Pal for a 'mahapada'.

They were stopped by the police, leading to arguments and confrontations between the police and the guest teachers. Then, the police used force to disperse the agitators.

State president of the manch Rajendra Shastri suffered head injuries and was taken to Civil Hospital for treatment. A couple of guest teachers also reportedly suffered minor injuries. Some guest teachers were detained, but later, they were released.



Police disperse guest teachers in Yamunanagar on Sunday.



Rajkiya Atithi Adhyapak Manch president Rajendra Shastri.

Vinay Jain, Ambala district president of the manch, said, "We were holding a peaceful agitation but the police cane-charged us. The state president has suffered serious injuries and he is undergoing treatment. Some other teachers who were in front have also suffered minor injuries. We condemn the police action

MILD FORCE USED

“The guest teachers were trying to reach the Education Minister's residence to start a permanent dharna... They also had some arguments and scuffles with the on-duty policemen. Mild force was used to stop them.

Ganga Ram Punia, YAMUNANAGAR SP

and the guest teachers will hold a meeting for the action ahead."

Rajendra Shastri, state president of the manch, said, "The guest teachers have already put in 18 years of their lives and they have been struggling to get their jobs regularised, but the government has been insensitive toward their

demand. The teachers have been staging dharna in Karnal for past 115 days, but to no avail. Today, we reached here to raise the demand before the Education Minister. We are not bad elements but still, we were brutally cane-charged. We will continue to struggle till our demand is fulfilled."

Meanwhile, the Yamunanagar police said, "About 200 guest teachers had gathered for an indefinite dharna in support of their demands. Initially, they were planning to camp near the residence of the Education Minister. But the police did not allow it. After this, they gathered in the grain market in front of the Mini Secretariat."

Yamunanagar SP Ganga Ram Punia said, "The guest teachers were trying to reach the Education Minister's residence to start a permanent dharna. Efforts were made to persuade them but they were adamant. They tried to run towards the other gate to keep moving. They also had some arguments and scuffles with the on-duty policemen. Mild force was used to stop them. I have received information about one person suffering injury. Appropriate action will be taken in this matter and a case is being registered."

Delhi again blames state for rising ammonia in Yamuna river

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

GURUGRAM, DECEMBER 31

The Delhi AAP government has yet again trained guns at Haryana for increased ammonia levels in the Yamuna. Water Minister Atishi has accused Haryana of allowing unrestricted discharge of pollutants into the Yamuna, leading to an alarming rise in the ammonia levels in the river.

She said that the high level of ammonia in water was impacting the production capacity of the Chandrawal and Wazirabad water treatment plants leading to water scarcity in many areas.

A senior official of Water Ministry said that industrial effluents from Haryana's Sonepat, Panipat and Rohtak districts and UP's Ghaziabad and Noida districts continue to pollute the Yamuna. Delhi alleges that drains number 2 and 6 from Haryana carry toxic industrial pollutants that fall into the Yamuna.

Due to frequent discharge of industrial waste, the level of ammonia in raw water rises, forcing the DJB to shut down water treatment plants till pollutants are washed away from the Wazirabad pond. Though Haryana is yet to officially react to allegations, a state minister said that AAP was just training guns at them to befool people and hide its inefficiency. —TNS

Under the scheme, the tax amount was divided into four categories, starting with an undisputed fee category for cases without dispute. Taxpayers will pay 100% of the amount in this category, with no penalties or interest.

For disputed taxes under Rs 50 lakh, taxpayers will pay 30% of the outstanding amount. For disputed taxes above Rs 50 lakh, they will pay 50 per cent.

The third category applies to undisputed taxes assessed by the department where no

CM launches one-time tax settlementscheme for traders



Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launches the 'one-time settlement' scheme in Gurugram on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

NEW YEAR'S GIFT FOR BUSINESS COMMUNITY

“This had been a long-pending demand of the business community and traders. We have given them this scheme as a New Year's gift. The move will enhance the state exchequer as well.

Manohar Lal Khattar, CHIEF MINISTER

lakh, the amount can be paid in two installments. If the outstanding is more than Rs 25 lakh, the payment can be spread across three installments: 40% in the first 90 days, 30% in the next 90 days, and 30% in the final 90 days.

The fourth category includes outstanding amounts due to differences in tax rates. Here, the government has discounted the amount, requiring taxpayers to pay only 30% of the total.

While offering tax relief, the OTS scheme also has installment option. Taxpayers with outstanding amounts below Rs 10 lakh must pay the entire sum in one lump sum before March 30. For Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25

lakh, the amount can be paid in two installments. If the outstanding is more than Rs 25 lakh, the payment can be spread across three installments: 40% in the first 90 days, 30% in the next 90 days, and 30% in the final 90 days.

Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala said the state has one of best tax structure in the country and collected Rs 46,000 crore in taxes so far.

"After the implementation of the OTS scheme, if businessmen, chartered accountants and tax lawyers cooperate, it is expected that tax collection in the state by March 31 can reach Rs 66,000 crore."

Questions being raised on meeting called by outgoing MC

Fog, cold wave continue to hit life in state; red alert in northern dists

DEEPENDER DESWAL

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, DECEMBER 31

As fog and cold wave continued to hit normal life in the state, the IMD on Sunday issued a red alert for the state's northern districts and orange alert for other parts for the first day of New Year.

Due to the prevailing condition, the Sun remained elusive throughout the day on Sunday in the state. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast, there is a possibility of partly cloudy sky in the state for the next couple of days. It also issued an orange alert for next four days in the entire state.

An IMD bulletin said there would be no major changes in minimum temperature in the next four days in the state. "Farmers are advised to give light and frequent irrigation to protect the wheat, mustard and other Rabi crops from cold



A thick blanket of fog covers a road in Hisar district on Sunday.

conditions. To prevent crop from freezing injury, apply sprinkler irrigation," the IMD advisory stated.

The farmers, however, were happy with the favourable weather conditions for the Rabi crops as mustard was at flowering stage and wheat crop germinating ears/headings.

The IMD said the daytime

temperature was 14.6 degrees Celsius in Hisar that was six degrees below the normal for this time of the year. The minimum temperature in Hisar was at 9 degrees Celsius, three degrees above normal. Narnaul recorded the minimum temperature in the state at 7.2 degrees Celsius last night.

Despite two night shelters in Jhajjar, workers sleep in open amid biting cold

RAVINDER SAINI

TREBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JHAJJAR, DECEMBER 31

Migrant labourers, including women, and their children are compelled to spend their nights in the open amid biting cold at Jhajjar city despite authorities setting up night shelters.

A group of labourers and their families was found sleeping in the open on the footpath outside the mini secretariat when a 'The Tribune' team visited the spot on Saturday night. Similarly, another group of labourers has been spending nights at the grain market.

"We have come to Jhajjar from Delhi. So, we don't have any knowledge about night shelter facilities. Cold is rising but we don't have any option except to sleep in the open," said Pushpa, a migrant



Labourers sleep in open outside the mini secretariat in Jhajjar on Saturday night. PHOTO: SUMIT THARAN

laborer. Mandor, another migrant labourer, said nobody cared about poor people.

The district administration said it has set up two night shelters in the city. But, labourers say they don't have knowledge about such facilities.

"We have come to Jhajjar from Delhi. So, we don't have any knowledge about night shelter facilities. Cold is rising but we don't have any option except to sleep in the open," said Pushpa, a migrant

laborer. Mandor, another migrant labourer, said nobody cared about poor people.

Covering himself with a blanket to brave the biting cold, Madan, from Rajasthan, said he had been suffering from fever for the past couple of days but was unable to get any help. "We all have arranged blankets and other woolen clothes to protect ourselves from the cold. Yet, chilled waves blowing for the past few days have made their

life more difficult," he said.

Deepak Kumar, Nodal Officer (night shelter), said two night shelters - one at bus stand and second in old tehsil campus - had been opened where facilities of 35 and 20 beds, respectively. Arrangement for blankets, water and meal had also been made there, he said.

"All beds at night shelters on the old tehsil campus and over 20 beds at the bus stand are vacant. Labourers sleeping at

night shelter.

Vikas Kumar, District Red Cross Society Secretary, said a vehicle of the society daily carries out patrolling of the city at night and takes the destitute, in any found, to night shelter.

Term of councillors to end on January 9

posal to set up the RWA office, multipurpose hall and dispensary was approved in the general house meeting in September 2019 but it has not yet been executed," said Kadam Singh Ahlawat, the councillor from Ward-11.

Ahlawat maintained similarly, another approved proposal for extension of community Center in Sector-14 failed to take off following the want of funds. "It is beyond my understanding what logic is behind seeking agenda items from the MCs when already approved projects are not

executed," he added.

Another councillor having affiliation with the ruling BJP

said there was not a single ward where all approved projects had been executed so it would have been better to organise a get-together-cum-farewell party instead of discussing/approving the agenda items at the meeting of the General House.

RMC Mayor Manmohan Goyal admitted that many ambitious projects and proposals had not yet been executed due to lack of funds. "The meeting has to be called following pressure from the councillors."

In collaboration with the Electricity Department in

Chandigarh, December 31

The CM Flying Squad has conducted a total of 2,236 raids/search operations throughout the year on various government departments/institutions and non-governmental entities.

As many as 454 cases were registered against those involved in food adulteration, 255 cases against those running illegal establishments, 321 cases of irregularities in various government departments, 187 cases of overloading/illegal mining and 108 cases of irregularities in government depots/mid-day meal stocks and black marketing.

Gurugram, the flying squad exposed electricity theft in a crusher resulting in a penalty of over Rs 3 crore.

In Faridabad, a factory producing illegal foreign cigarettes without licence was raided, seizing approximately 10 lakh cigarettes

valued at around Rs 2 crore.

Additionally, actions were taken against corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988, with arrests made in cases related to bribery in obtaining RC permits and NOC certificates.

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 31

The CM Flying Squad has conducted a total of 2,236 raids/search operations throughout the year on various government departments/institutions and non-governmental entities.

As many as 454 cases were registered against those involved in food adulteration, 255 cases against those running illegal establishments, 321 cases of irregularities in various government departments, 187 cases of overloading/illegal mining and 108 cases of irregularities in government depots/mid-day meal stocks and black marketing.

Gurugram, the flying squad exposed electricity theft in a crusher resulting in a penalty of over Rs 3 crore.

In Faridabad, a factory producing illegal foreign cigarettes without licence was raided, seizing approximately 10 lakh cigarettes

valued at around Rs 2 crore.

Additionally, actions were taken against corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988, with arrests made in cases related to bribery in obtaining RC permits and NOC certificates.

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 31

The CM Flying Squad has conducted a total of 2,236 raids/search operations throughout the year on various government departments/institutions and non-governmental entities.

As many as 454 cases were registered against those involved in food adulteration, 255 cases against those running illegal establishments, 321 cases of irregularities in various government departments, 187 cases of overloading/illegal mining and 108 cases of irregularities in government depots/mid-day meal stocks and black marketing.

Gurugram, the flying squad exposed electricity theft in a crusher resulting in a penalty of over Rs 3 crore.

In Faridabad, a factory producing illegal foreign cigarettes without licence was raided, seizing approximately 10 lakh cigarettes

valued at around Rs 2 crore.

Additionally, actions were taken against corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988, with arrests made in cases related to bribery in obtaining RC permits and NOC certificates.

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 31

The CM Flying Squad has conducted a total of 2,236 raids/search operations throughout the year on various government departments/institutions and non-governmental entities.

As many as 454 cases were registered against those involved in food adulteration, 255 cases against those running illegal establishments, 321 cases of irregularities in various government departments, 187 cases of overloading/illegal mining and 108 cases of irregularities in government depots/mid-day meal stocks and black marketing.

Gurugram, the flying squad exposed electricity theft in a crusher resulting in a penalty of over Rs 3 crore.

In Faridabad, a factory producing illegal foreign cigarettes without licence was raided, seizing approximately 10 lakh cigarettes

valued at around Rs 2 crore.

Additionally, actions were taken against corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988, with arrests made in cases related to bribery in obtaining RC permits and NOC certificates.

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 31

The CM Flying Squad has conducted a total of 2,236 raids/search operations throughout the year on various government departments/institutions and non-governmental entities.

As many as 454 cases were registered against those involved in food adulteration, 255 cases against those running illegal establishments, 321 cases of irregularities in various government departments, 187 cases of overloading/illegal mining and 108 cases of irregularities in government depots/mid-day meal stocks and black marketing.

Gurugram, the flying squad exposed electricity theft in a crusher resulting in a penalty of over Rs 3 crore.

In Faridabad, a factory producing illegal foreign cigarettes without licence was raided, seizing approximately 10 lakh cigarettes

valued at around Rs 2 crore.

</

Engineering students to review e-Adhigam module for government schools

MUKESH TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE



23K TABLETS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Devender Sharma, District Maths Specialist-cum-Nodal Officer of the e-Adhigam programme, said at present, around 23,000 tablets had been given to the students.

DIST-WISE BREAK-UP

District	Tablets to pupils
Gurugram	33,057
Panchkula	11,900
Ambala	20,474
Hisar	37,412
Kshetra	21,074
Sonepat	27,971
Jind	30,101
Sirs	32,355
Panipat	23,337
Yanagar	23,005
Jhajjar	18,373
Mgarh	16,968
Fatehabad	23,799
Rohtak	18,653
Karnal	28,582
Rewari	19,297
Kaithal	27,555
Charkhi Dadri	11,189
Bhiwani	29,635
Faridabad	29,810
Palwal	18,295
Nuh/Mewat	25,254

The third year students of polytechnic or engineering colleges would now review the e-Adhigam programme at the school level across the state. The Department of School Education (DSE) has made collaboration with the Department of Technical Education for it.

The Director-General, School Education, has directed all District Education Officers (DEOs) to conduct the training of students of technical education in collaboration with the colleges in their respective districts.

The state government had launched the programme, Advance Digital Haryana Initiative of Government with Adaptive Modules (Adhigam), last year, for providing e-learning to the students of Class IX to XII and distributed around 5.28 lakh tabs to them.

Through this scheme, the students get opportunities to learn from teachers across the globe. e-learning through tablets also helps the students in clearing their doubts while the schools are closed.

But, the students and teachers having the tablets were also facing problems due to some technical errors. Now, the Technical Education Department has been involved by the DSE for the proper implementation and review of the e-Adhigam programme at the school level. The third-year students of technical and engineering colleges will be involved for reviewing and identification of the problems under the e-Adhigam programme. The school mapping will be done by the Technical Education Department. The nodal officer appointed by the department will further send the names of the volunteer students to the DSE on a weekly basis. The voluntary participant will have to upload their inspection report counter signed by the school principal concerned within three days of the inspection.

The volunteer has to check and facilitate the distribution of tablets and data SIMs in all

schools, track data entry on the AVSAR portal at the school-level, check and facilitate the school staff in updating the latest version of the PAL. The orientation programme for the volunteer students will be conducted by the District Maths Specialists-cum-Nodal Officer of the e-Adhigam programme. Devender Sharma, District Maths Specialist-cum-Nodal Officer of the e-Adhigam programme said at present, around 23,000 tablets have been given to the students. The technical students from the engineering background would support more for the implementation of the e-Adhigam programme in the schools, Sharma said.

Reliance Commercial Finance Limited
Registered Office: The Ruby 11th Floor, North-West Wing, Plot No 29, Senapati Bapat Marg, Dadar (West) Mumbai - 400 028

POSSESSION NOTICE

(As per Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized officer of the Reliance Commercial Finance Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 08.01.2019 calling upon the borrower(s) /Co-borrower(s) 1. LAKHWINDER SINGH 2. KUSHAN RANI 3. DHARMARV SINGH & 4. RAM CHANDER DHARAM PAL and to repay the amount mentioned in the notices being Rs. 9,25,542/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Twenty Five Thousand Five Hundred Forty Two only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices.

The Borrower(s)/Co-borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this 28th day of December of the year 2023.

The Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the secured property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Reliance Commercial Finance Limited for a total amount of Rs. 9,25,542/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Twenty Five Thousand Five Hundred Forty Two only) and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property Situated At Hosue No.10. Situated At Sp Colony, Village Foosgarh, Tehsil Karnal, District Karnal-132001.

Date : 28/12/2023
Place : Chandigarh
(Authorized Officer)
For Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd.

Registered Office: HOFC Bank House, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, West Mumbai.
Branch Office: Sadhaura, Yamunanagar, Distr. Yamunanagar-133204
POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HOFC Bank Ltd. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) issued demand notice dated 09.10.2023 calling upon all the Borrowers and Guarantor (1). Jasbir Singh S/o Surjeet Singh R/o Vill. Rattuwalla (167), PO. Saffipur, Tehsil, Sadhaura, Distt. Yamunanagar-133204 (Applicant / Borrower). (2) Surjeet Singh S/o Hans Raj Vill. Rattuwalla (167), PO. Saffipur, Tehsil, Sadhaura, Distt. Yamunanagar-133204 (Co-Applicant / Borrower). (3) Manpreet W/o Jasbir Singh R/o Vill. Rattuwalla (167), PO. Saffipur, Tehsil, Sadhaura, Distt. Yamunanagar-133204 (Co-Applicant / Borrower). (4) Kamlesh W/o Surjeet Singh R/o Vill. Rattuwalla, PO. Saffipur, Tehsil, Sadhaura, Distt. Yamunanagar-133204, (Co-Applicant / Borrower). (5). Surinder Singh S/o Bichhu Ram R/o Vill. Rattuwalla (167), PO. Saffipur, Tehsil, Sadhaura, Distt. Yamunanagar-133204 (Guarantor) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 96,06,778.60 (Rs. Ninety Six Lakhs Six Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Eight & Paise Sixty only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

You all addresses having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to you all addresses and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property/asset described herein below on this 27th day of December of the year 2023.

You all addresses in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of HOFC Bank Ltd. for an amount of Rs. 96,06,778.60 (Rs. Ninety Six Lakhs Six Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Eight & Paise Sixty only) and interest thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY: Commercial Property alongwith construct and superstructure thereupon situated in Vill. Rattuwalla, PO. Saffipur, Teh. Sadhaura, Distt. Yamunanagar-133204, came in ownership of Kamlesh W/o Surjeet Singh vide Regd. Transfer Deed bearing No. 1338, Dt. 12/01/2023 forming part of Khetw No. (58/157) Khatuani No. (69) Khasra No. (29/18, 21, 22), Khetw No. (60/159) Khatuani No. (71 to 73) Khasra No. (42/7/7min, 28/18/2, 24, 25, 42/4, 7min, 42/2/7 min) Khetw No. (71/68) Khatuani No. (92/2/5) Khasra No. (42/1/6min, 42/1, 42/5, 8min, 42/6/6 min) measuring 108 Kanal - 0 Marla, Majua Rattuwalla, 167, Tehsil, Sadhaura, Distt. Yamunanagar-133204. Bounded by: North-Agriculture Land of Sh. Vikas Kumar (220'), South-Road (220') East-Agriculture Land of Sanjeev Kumar (198'). West-Agriculture Land of Sucha Singh (198'). Authorised Signatory, HOFC Bank Ltd.

Date: 27.12.2023 Place: Sadhaura, Yamunanagar, Haryana

People will give befitting reply to 'arrogant' govt: Deepender

Helicopter carrying ex-CM Hooda, Bhan unable to land due to fog

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KURUKSHETRA, DECEMBER 31 Congress leader Deepender Singh Hooda today said that the "arrogance" of the BJP-JJP government would be given a befitting treatment by the people of Haryana in the upcoming elections.

He was addressing a Jan Aakrosh rally at Ladwa grain market of Kurukshetra.

MP Deepender Hooda said, "Corruption, drug addiction, crime and unemployment are on the rise in Haryana. People of other states are getting jobs in Haryana while the youth of Haryana are forced to go abroad in search of jobs. People are selling their agricultural lands and houses to send their children to other countries through illegal routes and they are not even able to come back for years."

"Our players are returning their awards to get justice. A woman coach is fighting for justice. It was the 'Raj Dhama' of the government to give justice and not support the accused but the government is arrogant and spoke nothing in support people seeking justice. Farmers, labourers, sarpanches, sanitation workers and other employees were completely derailed Haryana from the



Congress leader Deepender Hooda addresses a 'Jan Aakrosh' rally in Kurukshetra on Sunday.

Haryana will teach a good lesson to the arrogant government," he alleged.

Taking a dig at BJP-JJP coalition, Deepender said, "Before the elections, BJP gave the slogan of '75 Paar' and JJP gave the slogan of 'Yamuna Paar', but after election, they became 'paakey yaar' (fast friends). The JJP has betrayed the people of Haryana. Corruption files were closed and a free hand was given to corrupt people. The BJP-JJP government formed on the alliance of selfishness has completely derailed Haryana from the

track of development and made it a victim of corruption. The BJP and JJP failed to fulfil their promises."

Former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and state party president Uday Bhan, were scheduled to address the rally but due to poor weather, they had to skip the event. Deepender informed the gathering that due to foggy conditions, the helicopter couldn't land and it was taken back to Delhi.

Deepender highlighted the work done during the Hooda government's

regime and said that the Congress is working hard to put Haryana back on the path of development and growth. He urged the voters to support the Congress.

He promised a bypass for Ladwa, 300 units of free power, Rs 6,000 old-age pension, reopening of the closed government schools and revival of Dadupur-Nalvi canal project, if voted to power.

Ladwa MLA Mewa Singh, MLA Bishanlal Saini, senior leader Ashok Arora, Hamroor Singh Chatha and several former MLAs addressed the gathering.

84 new borewells to be installed in Palwal villages to deal with waterlogging issue

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PALWAL, DECEMBER 31 The Irrigation Department has launched a drive to install 84 new borewells in the Hathin subdivision for dealing with the problem of waterlogging on the agricultural land of the district. The department aims at making a total of 148 borewells functional in the affected area, it is reported.

Sources in the Irrigation Department revealed that while nearly 64 borewells had already been installed in the low-lying areas of many villages falling in the Hathin subdivision over the past three years, a total around 1,100 acres was in the grip of the problem.

The cumulative number of borewells in the region is likely to swell up to 148 as the state government has sanctioned adequate funds for the project, says Pravin Dagar MLA, Hathin.

who inaugurated the construction work of a borewell at Mandkola village recently. The borewells will help in dealing with the waterlogging problem that had been persistent for over three decades, it is claimed.

However, the borewells that have already been installed have certain issues and a majority of these are yet to get power connection, it is revealed as there is no electricity connection, these have been lying unused.

The affected villages include Akbarpur Natol, Jita Kherli, Siyarioli, Kahnoli, Mandkola,

Madnaka, Durenchi, Bhangawali, Mirpur, Chhainsa, Mathepur, Mahlooka, Norangabad, Hunchpuri Kalan, Hunchpuri Khurd, Ranseka, Jalalpur, Rebar, Kotlika, Kamarchand, Kurthala, Alnika and Gughera.

Mohan Singh, a farmer, said

there was no stable and long-term plan for dealing with the waterlogging issue.

Though some pumps had been installed on a perennial basis, the slow pace of work had not given desired results despite the official claims made each year, he said.

The problem has been seri-

ous and the farmers have been bearing the brunt," says Mahender Singh, an office-bearer of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, a farmers' body.

He further said that it had affected the sowing of rabi crops almost every year. While the fields of many villages falling in the vicinity of the Gonchhi drain were among those affected, the water consumption capacity of the land in more than 10,000 acres had become minimal or lost completely, due to the area being low-lying and a high water table due to seepage caused by the canal.

Mohan Singh, a farmer, said there was no stable and long-term plan for dealing with the waterlogging issue. Though some pumps had been installed on a perennial basis, the slow pace of work had not given desired results despite the official claims made each year, he said.

The civil work of the installation of 84 new borewells at the cost of Rs 4.70 crore has been initiated," said Mohit Vashistha, Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department. He said the electrification of the already installed borewells would also be taken up soon.

The problem has been seri-



Bridge project a subject of mockery

Faridabad: The bridge project over the Yamuna near Manjhawali village in the district has become a subject of mockery for some of opposition leaders. While the work on the project, claimed to be the pet project of the local MP, is still on, a political leader belonging to the opposition party remarked that the bridge project had failed to get completed even after 10 years despite there being a triple-engine government (BJP government in Haryana, UP and the Centre). The bridge, if gets completed from the Faridabad side in the near future, will remain unused or non-operational, as no work has been taken on the UP side so far, to provide connectivity, it is claimed.

Plans of Congress leaders may go awry

Ambala: Senior leader and former minister Nirmal Singh and Chitra Sarwara's decision of resigning from AAP and rejoining the Congress, on January 5, has not only come as a major setback for AAP but may also disturb the plans of some local Congress leaders. Nirmal Singh, a loyalist of former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda's camp had accused Kumari Selja of betraying and had quit the Congress after Chitra was denied the ticket in the last Assembly elections. Some local leaders belonging to Selja group were making all efforts to strengthen their base for the Assembly elections, but the return of Nirmal and Chitra may disturb their plans.

JJP's flag decree for party workers



Rewari: Gearing up for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on his visit to Rewari advised JJP workers to put up party flags at their residences. He also pulled up the workers for not putting up the party flags at their houses. "The flags not only haunt leaders of opposition parties but also create an impression in favour of the party, which helps in gaining power. This is an era of publicity so every worker will have to propagate the party's policies and work done in the past over four years. The impression will get created on its own in favour of the JJP if we do so," said Dushyant.

Multiple ticket aspirants

Gurugram: With the Assembly elections due next year, the Gurugram and Badshahpur state Assembly seats are up for grabs. With speculations of the BJP not repeating previous candidates, over 15 aspirants are now fighting it out for the tickets. The aspirants are not only queuing up to meet the CM every time he comes but are also making regular trips to Chandigarh. The maximum number of aspirants are from Badshahpur who have even requested a special meeting with the party state leadership for an 'amicable solution'.

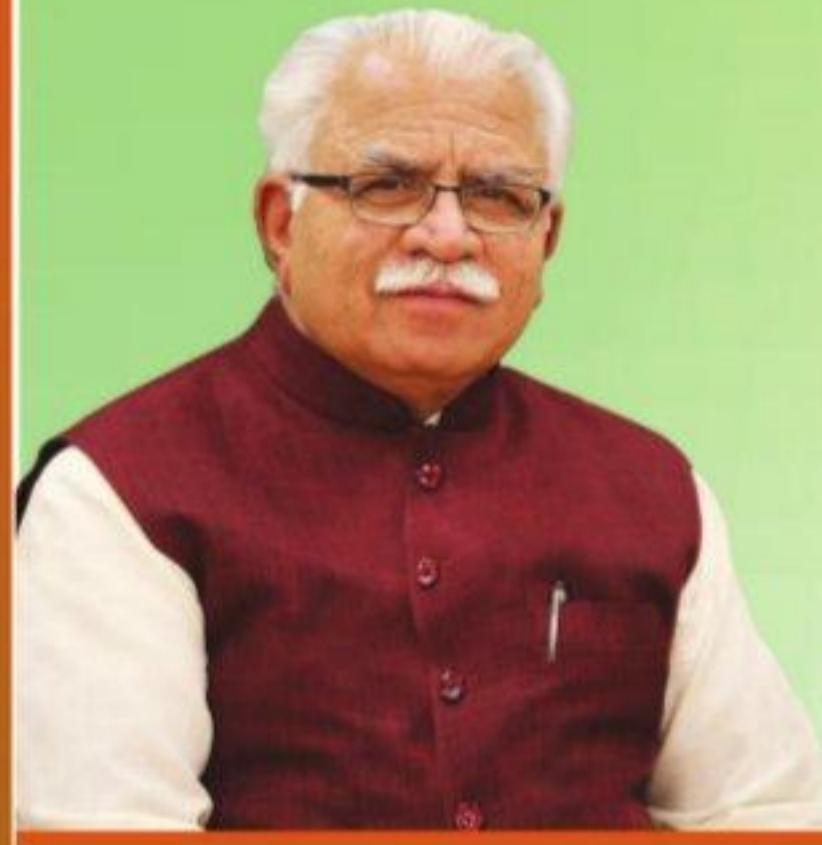
CONTRIBUTED BY: BUENDER AHLAWAT, NITISH SHARMA, RAVINDER SAINI, SUMEDHA SHARMA

REMEMBRANCE

In sweet, everlasting and revered memory of our parents

PROF. BISHAN SINGH SAMUNDRI
(01-01-1911 to 09-12-1997)

Founder Vice-Chancellor, G.N.D.U., Amritsar and Sardarni Dr. JAG



New Year 2024

Heartiest Greetings to all

“हरियाणा एक हरियाणी एक” के मूल मंत्र को ध्यान में रखते हुए प्रदेश का समान विकास हमारी प्राथमिकता रही है और इन्हीं दो मूल-मंत्रों के आधार पर हम प्रदेश के चहुंमुखी विकास के लिए काटिबद्ध हैं।

- मनोहर लाल

Innovative initiatives

- Dayalu Yojana** - Financial assistance up to Rs. 5 lakh to the families with annual income up to Rs 1.80 lakh in case of death of any family member.
- Chief Minister Teerth Yatra Yojana** - For senior citizens above 60 years of age belong to the families with annual income up to Rs. 1.80 lakh
- Revised Mukhyamantri Vyapari Kshatipurti Yojana** - Compensation for loss up to Rs 20 lakh to traders and businessmen
- 28,500 smartphones distributed free** of cost to Anganwadi workers
- P.M. Shri School Yojana** - 124 P.M. Shri schools started in the state
- Haryana Income Augmentation Board** launched to increase the income of Antyodaya families
- Haryana Antyodaya Parivar Parivahan Yojana** - Free travel facility in state transport buses to families with annual income less than Rs. 1 lakh.
- Chief Minister Antyodaya Milk Production Cooperative Incentive Scheme** - for Antyodaya milk producer families
- Guru Shishya Kaushal Samman Yojana** - For Certifying the skill capability of craftsmen, labour and workers
- Chief Minister Urban Housing Scheme** - Providing housing facilities to homeless people in cities
- Pran Vayu Devta Yojana** - Rs 2750 per tree distributed to the custodians of 3819 trees for the care of old trees
- Sanjha Dairy Yojana** - Scheme to open Sanjhi Dairy on Panchayat land in villages
- One Time Settlement Scheme-2023** - For settlement of tax dues of traders and businessmen.
- Monthly pension of Rs 2750 to widowers and unmarried people.**
- 33 percent ration depot** reserved for women
- Haryana Police honored with President's Colour**
- Cycle rally** organized from 1st to 25th September under de-addiction campaign
- Postal stamp issued in the name of **Emperor Hemchandra Vikramaditya**
- 8 percent reservation** for backward class 'A' for the posts of mayor of municipal corporations and president of city councils/municipalities.
- Country's first elevated railway track** inaugurated in Rohtak

From village to city, with every Scheme
Haryana's People, fulfilling every dream

“केंद्र और राज्य में डबल इंजन सरकार की ताकत हरियाणा को तेज़ी से आगे बढ़ा रही है। कोई भी सेक्टर हो, जैसे ही उसमें सामूहिक शक्ति जुटती है, सबका प्रयास नजर आने लगता है, तो परिवर्तन की गति भी बढ़ जाती है।”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी



सुशासन ही आधार
डबल इंजन हरियाणा सरकार

Striving towards People Welfare

- 14 toll tax barriers were removed** in year 2023
- 42 lakh families with annual income up to Rs 1.80 lakh are covered under **BPL Ration card facility**
- Ayushman-Chirayu Yojana** - Treatment facility of Rs.5 lakh annually to 1.10 crore beneficiaries including families with annual income up to Rs.3 lakh.
- Parivar Pehchan Patra** - Initialization of Disability Pension, Old Age Pension and OBC Certificate on Pro-Active Mode.
- Social security pension** increased to Rs 3000 monthly from January 2024
- 1198 colonies in cities were regularized**
- Sugarcane price increased from Rs 372 to Rs 386 per quintal.
- An amount of **Rs. 112 crore issued** to farmers to compensate their flood losses through Kshatipurti Portal
- Incentive amount of **Rs. 138 crore released** to farmers adopting stubble management
- Honorarium of Asha workers increased from **Rs 4000 to Rs 6100 monthly**.
- Online Transfer Portal for Group-D Employees
- Monthly remuneration of Anganwadi workers **increased to Rs 14,000**
- Monthly pension of Matribhasha Satyagrahis, emergency victims and their widows and journalists **increased to Rs 15,000**.
- Scholarship amount for children of industrial workers **increased from Rs 5000 to Rs 16000**
- An amount of **Rs 4500 to women workers to buy sewing machines**
- An amount of **Rs 5000 for industrial workers to buy bicycles**.
- Increase in allowances of police personnel by two and a half times
- Players of **Haryana won 30 medals** in Asian Games-2022
- 100% railway **electrification work completed** in Haryana
- Laid the foundation stone of the state's second airport in Ambala
- Bhoomi pujan** of 2 new government medical colleges in Kaithal and Yamunanagar
- Commission of ration depot holders increased from **Rs 1.50 to Rs 2**.
- Sarpanch's honorarium increased to **Rs 5000 and Panch's to Rs 1600 monthly**.
- Honorarium of mayors, heads and members of municipalities **increased up to Rs 30,000 per month**

Extraditing Saeed

Vital for India to mount pressure

PAKISTAN'S unwillingness to accede to India's request for the extradition of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) founder Hafiz Saeed was obvious. As expected, within hours of India making its demand public, Islamabad effectively rejected it, stating that the two countries had no bilateral treaty to address such matters. Nevertheless, the message conveyed by New Delhi is significant. Pakistan's patronage of the mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks continues unabated. The LeT and other terror groups are flourishing. Reports that Saeed's son Talha plans to contest February's general election is an endorsement of India's stand that mainstreaming of terrorist groups is a state policy in Pakistan. India had designated Talha as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in 2022. He serves as the LeT's second-in-command, controlling its finances.

A Pakistani court had sentenced Saeed to 31 years in prison in 2022 after he was convicted of terror financing. He had been found guilty on similar charges in 2020 and awarded a 15-year sentence. India views the prison terms as the outcome of the pressure exerted by the Financial Action Task Force and Western powers. Its request for extradition this time round also lists charges of money laundering for terror purposes. It's a reminder that international efforts against designated terror groups and their sponsors still lack a coherent and all-encompassing strategy.

The LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawah, a front for the terror group, have been banned by the US and the United Nations. China remains a stumbling block, shielding Islamabad against sanctions by a UN committee that focuses on the principal perpetrators of the 26/11 attacks. Whatever the odds, it's vital for India to keep mounting pressure for action against the likes of Saeed. He represents an ideology that incites hatred and justifies terror. It has to be defeated.

ULFA peace pact

Assam hopes to expedite development projects

THE year 2023 — headlined by the wars in Gaza and eastern Europe — concluded with a peace pact signed by the Central and Assam governments with the Arabinanda Rajkhowa-led faction of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) on December 29. While the Paresh Baruah-led hardline faction of ULFA is not a party to the agreement, it is a historic breakthrough in more ways than one.

Most importantly, it envisages the culmination of the 44-year-old armed struggle launched by ULFA in 1979, seeking a 'sovereign' Assam. The negotiations between the Centre and the pro-talks ULFA faction began in 2011 and have finally borne fruit, holding out hope for the insurgency-ridden state to expedite development projects with financial aid from the Centre. Simultaneously, a resolution of the socio-cultural strife in Assam is on the horizon as the pact promises to address the issues of illegal immigration and land rights for indigenous communities.

However, the Centre will have to tread warily as it still needs to deal with the hardline group of ULFA, whose leader Baruah is hiding somewhere along the China-Myanmar border. A series of kidnappings, extortion cases, killings and bomb blasts led to ULFA being outlawed in 1990, even as the draconian AFSPA was invoked, giving sweeping powers to the armed forces to crack down on violators of the law in Assam. Though the Act has been revoked in some parts of the state in the past two years, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma must work towards withdrawing it from the remaining areas too. Lasting peace and the end of a long chapter of insurgency are possible by ensuring that every citizen is part of the mainstream.

ON THIS DAY...50 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

CHANDIGARH, TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1974

PONDICHERRY UPHEAVAL

THE DMK Government in Pondicherry, led by Farook Maricar, has fallen after being in office for four years and nine months. The exit of the government was necessitated by the resignation of two of the four ministers from the Cabinet and the party on Friday. They have joined the ADMK along with another DMK member of the Assembly. The outgoing Chief Minister had earlier said that he still commanded absolute majority, on the flimsy plea that he had received the resignations of the two ministers only from the Cabinet and not from the party and that no other DMK MLA had defected till then. Ultimately, he decided to quit after recommending the dissolution of the Assembly. Even in the normal course, elections to the Pondicherry Assembly are due to be held on February 24, and as such the fall of the government may not make much difference to the people at large as it might to the DMK in the circumstances. Though the resignation of the two ministers appeared to be a sudden development, it followed a growing rift between them and the Chief Minister. The Tamil Nadu CM, Karunanidhi, who is also the DMK President, said he was not shocked by the developments in Pondicherry as he had anticipated them. The defectors have accused both Maricar and Karunanidhi of following an opportunistic political line regarding the ensuing Assembly elections. The two rebel ministers were evidently not pacified even after the DMK high command included them in the state poll committee a month ago. The latest developments in Pondicherry may improve the strength of the ADMK there.

The scourge of illegal migration

Nicaragua flight row points to the scale of the problem and the need for comprehensive reforms

KP NAYAR
STRATEGIC ANALYST

UNKNOWN to nearly 300 Indian nationals on the ill-starred 'human trafficking' flight to Nicaragua, their attempt to sneak into prosperous North America was doomed a month before they boarded the Romanian charter aircraft.

On November 21, the US State Department invoked a provision in America's Immigration and Nationality Act to target, foil and punish those who were routinely ferrying foreigners into Nicaragua on charter flights. The traffickers' intention was to eventually push these foreigners into the US through dangerous overland and waterway routes northwards, the department alleged. The announcement, scarcely noticed in India at that time, made four key points. One, Nicaragua has emerged as a new illegal transit point for prospective migrants to the US through unlawful means and the Joe Biden administration is preparing to smash this racket. Two, criminal gangs are charging 'extortion-level' prices from migrants and exposing them to grave risks. Three, the US will hunt down such illegal immigrants even if they enter the country and repatriate them back home at a great cost thereby dashing their hopes of realising the 'American dream'. Four, the US administration is preparing to crack down on 'owners, executives and senior officials of companies providing charter flights to Nicaragua'.

Section 212 (a)(3)(C) of the US Act "allows the Secretary of State to exclude any applicant whose entry or proposed activities in the United States would have potentially serious adverse foreign poli-



MENACE: Exploitation of Indians aspiring to go abroad is occurring on a global scale. REUTERS

cy consequences for the US". The November announcement said it was this provision that Secretary of State Antony Blinken planned to use against the Nicaraguan kingpins of the immigration racket and their collaborators and facilitators around the globe. On the eve of the UAE-Nicaragua charter flight, the State Department reiterated that those operating such flights to Nicaragua, carrying migrants whose final destination was the US-Mexico border, would not be spared under the cited law. Unfortunately, this second warning by Washington was also missed in India.

It is assumed that a French government unit, which fights organised crime, was tipped off by its US counterparts once the latter gathered intelligence that a Legend Airlines flight with several hundred suspect Indians would land at the Vatry airport for refuelling. It is reassuring that transatlantic sharing of intelligence makes the world a safer place. But it also raises a disturbing question: Why was such intelligence not shared with New Delhi? After all, almost the entire plane load which was detained in France for four days at an airport ill-equipped for such emergencies comprised Indian nationals.

A reliable source in Washington said US officials did not want to

least two plane loads of Indians were similarly taken undetected recently on charter flights to Nicaragua. In their calculated effort to dramatise the latest escapade of several hundred illegal Indian migrants to the West, crime-fighting agencies of the US and French governments kept not only India but also the United Nations in the dark about the extensive criminal network operating mainly from Punjab and Gujarat all the way to the Western hemisphere via Europe. PRAYAS is a joint project between the UN body, the International Organisation for Migration and the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi's oldest government-managed international relations think tank.

In yet another irony, the MEA warned a week before the Legend Airlines charter flight that "there has been a huge rise in the number of overseas job seekers being cheated by unregistered recruitment agents". Preying on Indians who want to go abroad is happening on a global scale. The MEA warned that "cases are being reported... in several East European countries, some Gulf countries, Central Asia, Israel, Canada, Myanmar and Lao People's Democratic Republic".

During every session of Parliament, the government gets a large volume of questions for zero hour on the scourge of illegal migration. A week before the Romanian flight, an MEA minister pleaded helplessness in the Lok Sabha about the complexity of the problem. "Many foreign countries do not provide information on illegal stay in their countries, until when there are orders of deportation," the minister said. He conceded that "our Missions do not have any reliable data on the number of Indians staying or working illegally in foreign countries". To say that this is shocking is an understatement. This will not do. The episode at the Vatry airport points to the scale of the problem and the need for comprehensive immigration reforms, failing which more Indians will become victims of migration touts and global criminal gangs.

Even as Indians were boarding the flight to Nicaragua, the Central government was locking the stable door after the horses had bolted.

disrupt the flight before it was airborne. They wanted to effectively expose the migration racket by making it hit the headlines so that action would be taken on a global scale. While the plane, which even had unaccompanied minor passengers, was under siege at Vatry, it made news throughout the world. Christmas celebrations were disrupted in northeastern France and official circles in Paris because of the unusual incident, which made it big on television in Europe.

Criminal gangs preying on wannabe migrants to the West will not attempt a similar flight, at least

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Human trafficking is a scourge, a crime against the whole of humanity. — Pope Francis

Glitter of gold saved the day

NJ RAVI CHANDER

IN the late 1980s, my bank colleague had a bizarre train adventure. He was returning to Mangaluru, his place of posting, from Bengaluru, his hometown. Besides meeting his relatives, his purpose of visiting Bengaluru was to settle a gold loan he had taken from the bank.

After completing the loan formalities, he took possession of his ornaments — a chain and a necklace. The chain dangled from his neck, while he discreetly concealed the necklace in a secret pocket in his trousers. That night, he bid farewell to his relatives and set off on his journey back to Mangaluru.

In the wee hours, he went to the washroom on the train. As he unfastened his pants, the gold necklace slipped out of his pocket, slid down the toilet and landed on the railway track. He dashed out of the washroom towards the nearest emergency chain and tugged at it. The high-speed train came to a screeching halt.

Everything happened in a trice, jolting some passengers from their sleep. The train driver and the TTE (travelling ticket examiner) rushed to the compartment in question to zero in on the passenger. My colleague was perspiring as he faced them; he told them why he had pulled the chain. Content with the explanation, the locomotive operator and the TTE stepped off the train in the night to search for the ornament.

The train had halted near a dense jungle in the Western Ghats, teeming with wild animals. Despite the danger, the railway officials were determined to help the passenger find the necklace. Armed with a flashlight, they strode out along with a few passengers. The search in the pitch dark extended beyond a kilometre on the tracks.

The team scoured the tracks for half an hour and concluded that it was an exercise in futility. They called off the search. Despite my colleague's desperate plea to venture further up to trace the ornament, the officials declined his request, citing safety concerns in the hazardous terrain.

Just as the search party was getting ready to hop on the train, the banker caught sight of a glimmer of light on the track only a few feet away. He rushed towards it and found his necklace. The tension quickly evaporated, giving way to palpable relief and joy. The luminous glow produced by the gemstone encrusted in the ornament had saved the day. Grabbing the necklace, he hurriedly made his way to the train. Luckily, the train had stopped before entering a tunnel; otherwise, finding the ornament would have been quite tough.

The train finally reached Mangaluru railway station. The banker submitted a written statement to the TTE as per the Railways' guidelines, mentioning the approximate weight of the necklace that was lost and found. He thanked his lucky stars — and the glitter of gold — for a happy ending.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Politics of intolerance

Refer to 'Hoping for liberal and inclusive politics' (*Nous Indica*); it is critical to denounce hatred based on religious affiliation. Delegitimising the identity agenda is easier said than done. Violence, fear and fanaticism are inimical to social and communal harmony. There is nothing inherently wrong in taking pride in one's identity — whether regional or religious. However, curbing the politics of intolerance and antagonism towards other beliefs and identities, especially for electoral gains, remains a national challenge, particularly in the run-up to the General Election. Course correction is essential to ensure that our hallmark of 'unity in diversity' doesn't lose its relevance.

LALIT BHARADWAJ, PANCHKULA

Bring everyone together

Apropos of 'Hoping for liberal and inclusive politics', the article aptly emphasises the need for delegitimisation of identity politics. The new year presents an opportunity moment to discard the politics of hatred and animosity — which has caused considerable harm to peaceful coexistence — and encourage an inclusive and representative political discourse. The gesture of the PM to invite Church leaders to his residence to celebrate Christmas is indeed commendable. While some observers may view such an action in the election year as opportunistic, it signifies a shift towards the desired goal of inclusive and representative politics, bringing everyone together.

RAVI SHARMA, DHARIALAL

Diplomatic win for India

Refer to 'Qatar reprieve'; the commutation of the death sentence of eight former Indian naval officers in Qatar is a positive development. It can be seen as a diplomatic win for India, particularly amid the Gaza conflict, given New Delhi's close ties with Israel and Qatar. The meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Qatar's ruler during the recent COP28 summit in Dubai probably played an important role in this outcome, dispelling concerns about the former Navy personnel becoming geopolitical pawns.

SK SINGH, BY MAIL

Lax attitude

Refer to 'Riverbed mining'; illegal mining along the Neugal riverbed raises concerns about the apparent inaction of the local administration, the police, mining and forest departments. It appears that they are collectively in a state of deep slumber, turning a blind eye to this unlawful activity that has led to severe environmental degradation in the area. Despite written complaints from the residents and the village head, no decisive action has been taken against the culprits. The situation demands immediate and concerted action to combat the mining mafia.

BIR DEVINDER SINGH BEDI, SANGRUR

Metro for Chandigarh

Apropos of 'Metro no silver bullet to ease traffic woes of tier-II cities'; the writer virtually dismisses the Chandigarh Administration's proposal for a Metro, contending that it would spoil the city's picturesque landscape. Contemplating such an idea to address the growing traffic problem is akin to searching for one's car keys under a lamppost after having misplaced them inside a bar. The question is: why does a city like London not face traffic problems? The answer lies in the combination of an exorbitant entry tax for every private vehicle and exceptionally high parking rates. This strategy has compelled even the affluent and high-ranking daily commuters to opt for local buses and trains.

BALVINDER, CHANDIGARH

Liberalised pension after 14 years

Apropos of '14 yrs after soldier's death, mother gets liberalised pension'; it is ironic that Gurdial Kaur, mother of Naik Kulwinder Singh (who was killed in an avalanche 14 years ago), received the liberalised pension only after the intervention of an Armed Forces Tribunal Bench. The Defence Accounts Department released the family pension to the father of team leader Capt Prateek Puntambekar in January 2014, but continued to deny the benefit to families of other soldiers. Any interest accrued for delayed payments should be borne by the erring officials, along with remarks in their annual confidential reports.

UPENDRA SHARMA, BY MAIL

Letters to the Editor, typed in double space, should not exceed the 200-word limit.

These should be cogently written and can be sent by e-mail to: Letters@tribunemail.com

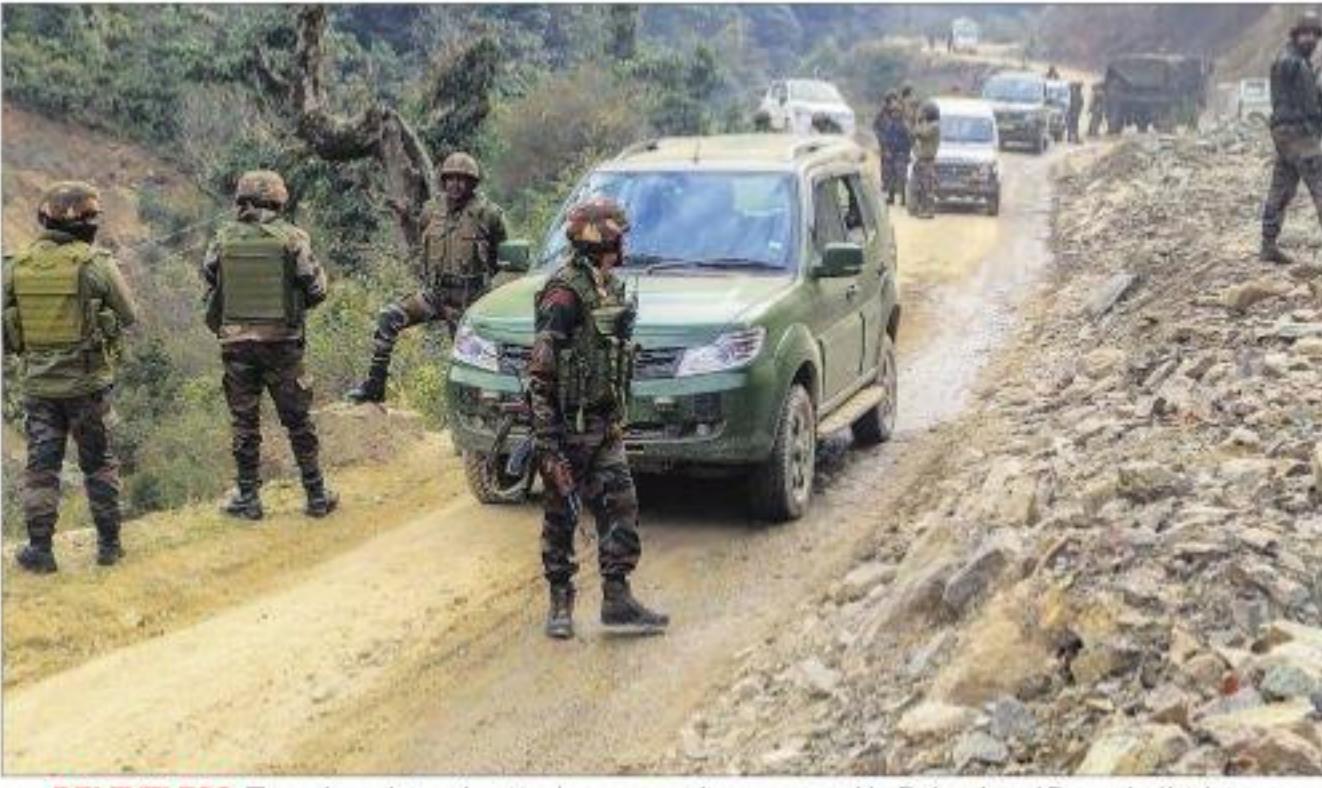
Look beyond military approach in Rajouri-Poonch



LUV PURI
JOURNALIST AND AUTHOR

THESE seems to be no let-up in intermittent attacks on security personnel in the Rajouri-Poonch area along the Pir Panjal mountain range that separates the homogenous Kashmir valley from the geographically, religiously and ethnically heterogeneous region of Jammu. The responsibility for the attacks, like in previous cases, has been claimed by the People's Anti-Fascist Front, which reportedly emerged in 2019.

Since 2019, the militants' strategy has been to carry out targeted killings in the Valley and inflict losses on security personnel in Rajouri and Poonch districts. On December 21, four Army personnel were killed in an ambush at a spot between Dera Ki Gali and Baflia. A total of 59 people — 24 security personnel, seven civilians and 28 terrorists — were killed in Rajouri-Poonch in the past year. Psychological warfare is a component of the militant strategy, which is reflected in the fact that attackers use body cameras to film attacks and then upload videos on



RELENTLESS: There is no let-up in attacks on security personnel in Rajouri and Poonch districts. PTI

said to be the brainchild of the Pakistani officer in command of the region across the LoC, Maj Gen Akhtar Hussain Malik. Many Muslim families had also escaped across the LoC after the Indian Army re-established control, particularly in border areas of Poonch.

After 1990, it was always impossible to completely sanitise the surrounding peaks to facilitate Army movement. Road-opening patrols became a crucial part of the strategy since the mid-1990s. Several mid-level members of the official machinery have been ambushed by militants in the region in the past two decades. No doubt, the arduous terrain is a constant. However, one cannot ignore the failures in one of the most militarised areas of the

subcontinent due to its proximity to the LoC. The label of 'foreign militants' from Pakistani Punjab and PoK does not hold true in Rajouri-Poonch as militants coming from across the LoC are largely from the same ethnic and linguistic stock. This ensures easy assimilation. That is why the strategy of winning over the local community is at the heart of effective tactics.

A key initiative was taken by then PM Indira Gandhi, who realised the potency of the approach as part of the efforts to beef up border security. In 1976, she participated in a Gujar conference in J&K as part of the outreach to the Gujar-Bakarwali community, one of the main communities which live in this area. Over time, there has been a concerted effort to

forge strong bonds between J&K Gujjars, who are Muslims, and Hindu Gujjars, particularly from Rajasthan and the areas around Delhi. This endeavour aims to secularise the Gujar identity. In 1991, Gujjars-Bakarwals were granted Scheduled Tribe (ST) status and that solidified their support against terrorism, particularly in the elite sections of the community. A number of serving IAS and IPS officers, coming from the Gujar community, were direct beneficiaries of this decision. The multi-pronged approach yielded more dividends as the Gujjars in the area collaborated with security personnel, contributing to cleansing the region of the ranks of a terrorist outfit, Lashkar-e-Taiba. One of the Gujar groups hailed from Baflia, and specifically, the Marrah hamlet, which is not far from the area where the recent attack occurred. After the attack, some community members were allegedly picked up by the Army on the suspicion that they were working for the militants; three of them died in custodial torture. The continuing attacks on security personnel and alleged custodial deaths are a setback to the investment made in border management over the years in an area that had almost become militancy-free two decades ago.

To understand the present, one cannot discount the overall context. Since the abrogation of Article 370, a

void in terms of policy execution and calibration.

In a nutshell, addressing the security challenge in Rajouri-Poonch requires more than just a military approach; it must be embedded in local politics and a delicate societal equilibrium. Security, after all, is never solely a military problem.

Pollution emerging as a key contributor to heart attacks



FOR decades, we have relied on an outdated understanding of what causes heart attacks. It is imperative to fathom the new risks that result in heart attacks, the world's number one killer of both men and women.

Pollution, a potent risk factor has altered the landscape and a radically new approach is mandated. Without this, cardiologists and general practitioners will be doing injustice to a patient. A new approach in public health aspects of heart attacks is needed.

A simplistic understanding of the traditional risk factors assumed that heart attacks would occur among the section of the population that had diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, and among smokers. Traditionally, heart attacks and strokes have been associated with older age groups. So, as doctors advocating heart attack prevention, we focused on this narrow group. Public health policies separated this group and

devised pragmatic approaches to deal with this segment.

Today, this method is not only outdated but also dangerous. Now, without exception, the people living in heavily polluted areas of India are vulnerable to heart attacks. To make matters worse, it is not only heart attacks but also stroke (the number two killer of humankind) and cancers that will be attacking an entire population.

We have a crisis on our hands. Let us understand and tackle it. Let 2024 begin with a new approach to managing heart attacks amid their biggest risk factor: pollution.

Do the following scenarios appear familiar to you?

1) A 50-year-old farmer is awoken from sleep; he is clutching his chest in severe pain. By the time his wife summons the son, the patient has stopped breathing. He is no more — dead at a young age from a massive heart attack.

2) A 32-year-old engineer is rushed to a hospital; he is declared dead on arrival; a post-mortem detects a heart attack and evidence of drug use.

3) A 56-year-old housewife, overweight and with diabetes, had been complaining of chest pressure for two weeks. When it gets worse, she is taken to a hospital, where doctors find that she had a heart attack recently.

Let us use these three real-life cases to discuss the rapidly



CHALLENGE: A multi-pronged approach is required to reduce the impact of pollution. PTI

rising incidence of heart attacks in India. There may be clues as to why heart attacks are on the rise among young people.

This public health crisis is exacerbated by two distinct but interconnected groups of factors: existing high-risk health conditions and the worsening impact of pollution. Understanding the nuances of these groups is crucial to addressing the growing challenge.

In India, these conditions are increasingly affecting the younger population. This shift is largely attributed to the high prevalence of metabolic syndrome — a cluster of conditions, including increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around

the waist and abnormal cholesterol levels — which accelerates the development of atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease and, consequently, heart attacks and strokes.

Without exception, the people living in heavily polluted areas of India are vulnerable to heart attacks.

the waist and abnormal cholesterol levels — which accelerates the development of atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease and, consequently, heart attacks and strokes.

The number of diabetics in India is among the highest in the world. It further complicates this picture. Diabetes is a significant risk factor for heart diseases and is a key contributor to the high incidence of heart-related ailments.

A disturbing global trend is the high incidence of heart attacks in women. Long understood as a disease that predominantly affects men, heart attacks are very common in women too. In fact, more women die from heart attacks than from all cancers

combined. Because of several cultural, social and financial reasons, heart attacks in women are ignored and there are longer delays in taking the affected women to a hospital.

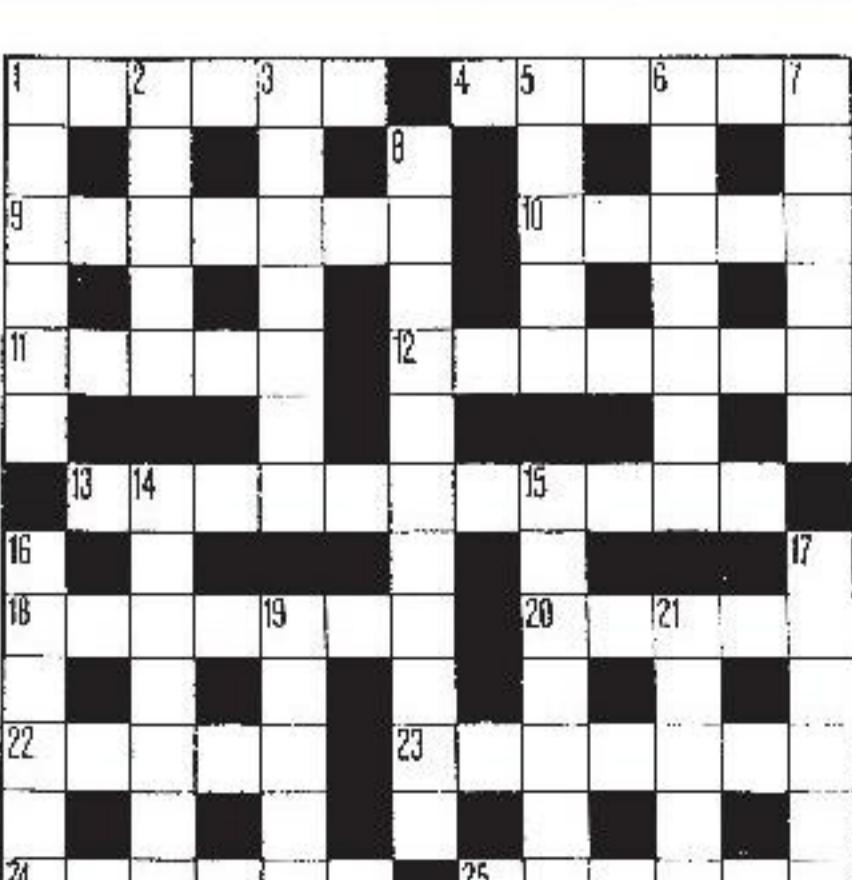
The second group of factors worsening India's heart attack epidemic is pollution. Pollution acts as a universal risk factor, affecting not just individuals with pre-existing health conditions but also the entire population. Its wide-reaching impact makes pollution a more significant contributor to heart diseases than traditional factors.

For instance, the recent spike in heart attacks among teenagers in Gujarat and studies predicting a reduction in life expectancy by 10-12 years for residents of Delhi due to pollution underscore the impact of environmental factors on heart health.

Public health approaches in India now face the dual challenge of addressing the pre-existing epidemic of heart-related diseases and mitigating the effects of pollution. This compound problem requires an integrated approach, focusing on both individual health management and broader environmental policies.

The heart attack epidemic in India is a complex problem compounded by the pervasive impact of pollution. By tackling the traditional risk factors as well as the challenge of pollution, India can hope to stem the tide of this epidemic and safeguard the heart health of its population.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Repudiate (6)
- 4 Roman god of fire (6)
- 9 Wraith (7)
- 10 Frighten (5)
- 11 A culinary herb (5)
- 12 Playhouse (7)
- 13 Shift responsibility (4,3,4)
- 18 Pagan (7)
- 20 Auctioneer's hammer (5)
- 22 Contempt (5)
- 23 A level in a hierarchy (7)
- 24 Follow advice (6)
- 25 Assign (6)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

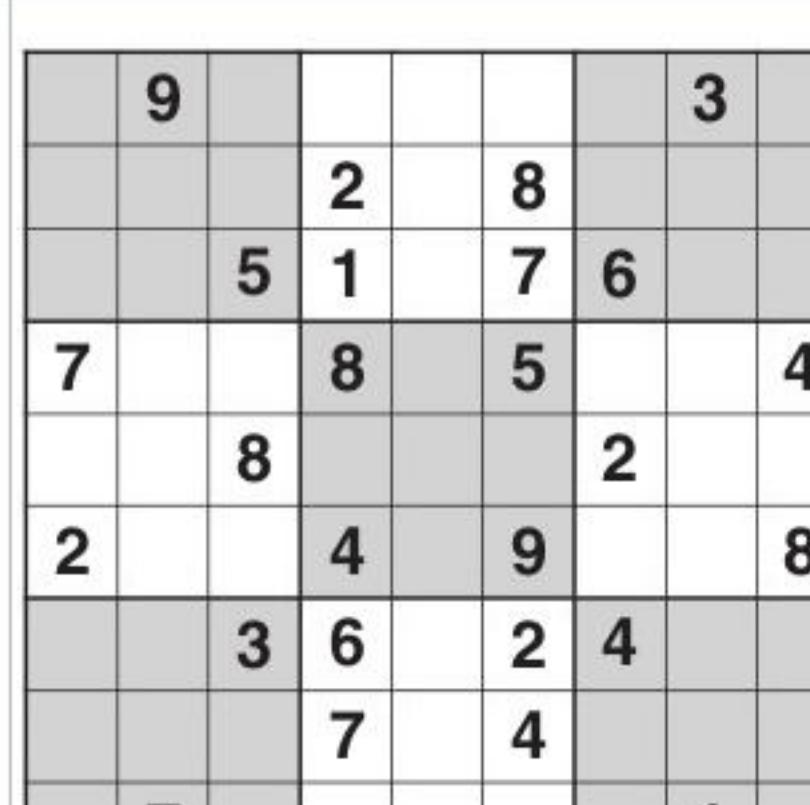
Across: 1 Cockpit, 5 Scrub, 8 Smooth-talking, 9 Ensue, 10 Harvest, 11 Squint, 12 Frayed, 15 Appear, 17 Album, 19 Pusillanimous, 20 Risky, 21 Nemesis.

Down: 1 Caste, 2 Cross-purposes, 3 Pattern, 4 Tetchy, 5 Solar, 6 Raise eyebrows, 7 Bigoted, 11 Scamper, 13 Realism, 14 Retain, 16 Alley, 18 Muses.

DOWN

- 1 Second in command (6)
- 2 Disreputable (5)
- 3 Testimony (7)
- 5 Excessive (5)
- 6 Bitterly sarcastic (7)
- 7 Aspice (6)
- 8 Having obtained nothing (5-6)
- 14 Perplexed (2,1,4)
- 15 Important person (3,4)
- 16 Carpentry tool (6)
- 17 Base supporting statue (6)
- 19 For this reason (5)
- 21 Russia's principal river (5)

SU DO KU



V. HARD

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

2	8	5	7	4	9	6	1	3
4	6	9	1	8	3	2	5	7
1	3	7	6	2	5	8	4	9
9	5	3	2	7	4	1	8	6
8	2	6	5	9	1	7	3	4
7	4	1	8	3	6	5	9	2
3	7	2	4	1	8	9	6	5
5	1	4	9	6	2	3	7	8
6	9	8	3	5	7	4	2	1

CALENDAR

JANUARY 1, 2024, MONDAY

■ Shaka Samvat	1945
■ Posh Shaka	11
■ Posh Parvishtha	17
■ Hijiari	1445
■ Krishna Paksha Tithi 5, up to 2.29 pm	
■ Ayushman Yoga up to 4.35 am	
■ Magha Nakshatra up to 8.36 am	
■ Moon in Leo sign	
■ Gandmoola up to 8.36 am	

FORECAST

CITY	17:33 HRS	
	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Chandigarh	13	10
New Delhi	18	10
Amitsar	14	08
Bathinda	18	08
Jalandhar	14	07
Ludhiana	15	08
Bhiwani	18	08
Hisar	17	07
Sirsra	16	08
Dharamsala	18	06
Manali	14	01
Shimla	15	04
Srinagar	08	-03
Jammu	18	08
Kargil	06	-08
Leh	04	-10
Dehradun	24	06
Mussoorie	14	05

TEMPERATURE IN °C

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION VACANT

100% Export Manufacturing & Technology, Jandiala Road, Tarn Taran required Assistant Professor in Management/ Commerce, Computer Applications. Non-Teaching Staff: Receptionist. Qualification as per AICTE/ UGC/ IKG-PTU/ Pb. Govt. norms. Apply online at <https://www.chiekhalsadiwan.com/> & send your resume at ckdmtm@gmail.com within 15 days. 70874-00770. (CL23093371)

Amar Shheed Baba Ajit Singh
Jujhar Singh Memorial College Bela, Distt. Ropar invites applications for the post of Assistant Professor in Biotechnology (1), Chemistry (1), Mathematics (2), Physics (1), Computer (1) within 10 days from the date of publication of the advertisement by Email: mail@belacollege.org. Qualification as per UGC & Punjabi University, Patiala norms. Secretary, 01811-263533, 98156-20645. (CL23093453)

For Circulation and Advertisement booking and other related queries please call at following numbers from Monday to Saturday between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.

Circulation:

0172-2670319, 2670250, 2670442

E-mail at:

circulation@tribunemail.com

Advertisement:

0172-2670257, 2670338

E-mail at:

classified@tribunemail.com

Display: 0172-2670256, 2670342

E-mail at: advt@tribunemail.com

S.D. College of Pharmacy, Bambala 148101 (Punjab). Approved by PCI, New Delhi & Affiliated to MRSPTU, Bathinda & PSBTE & IT- Chandigarh invites application for the posts of Assistant Professor-03, Office Clerk-01, Lab Attendant-02, Peon-01. Qualification: As per PCI norms, candidates may apply within 07 days of publication of this advertisement by post/ Email: sdpharmacyrec@gmail.com (Dr. Anesh Parkash- President). (CL23093458)

Wanted full time/ part IVF Gynecologist (Reproduction Medicine), Gastroenterologist, Nephrologist, Embryologist, Dermatologist, Microbiologist, Laparoscopic & General Surgeon, Pediatrician for Bhagwati Hospital, Sector 13, Rohini, Delhi. 98112-07177. bhagwatihospital13@gmail.com (CL23092632)

GHG Harpakash College of Education for Women, Sidhwani Khurd (Ludhiana). Requires Assistant Professor on contract basis in Chemistry 01 for the session 2023-24. Eligible candidates in accordance with the qualifications/ conditions laid down by State Govt./ Panjab University, apply within 10 days at ghg.sidhwankhurd@yahoo.co.in & by post. Download application proforma from www.ghgkhurdwani.org Ph. 01624-234941, 62399-97177. Principal. (CL23093509)

Khalsa College for Women, Sidhwani Khurd (Ludhiana). Requires Assistant Professor on contract basis in Chemistry 01 for the session 2023-24. Eligible candidates in accordance with the qualifications/ conditions laid down by State Govt./ Panjab University, apply within 10 days at kew.sidhwani@rediffmail.com & by post. Download application proforma from www.kewsidhwani.org Ph. 01624-234967, 62399-97177. (CL23093511)

PROPERTY FOR SALE

Chandigarh One kanal B-Road old house Sector 33, Lamba Associates: 93177-44666, 84270-01122, 93161-03452. (CL23093350)

CHANDIGARH

2- 1 kanal houses, old/ moderate built, Sector 8, Chandigarh. Jeet Associates: 96468-09090. (CL23093206)

Buy, sell, rent property- residential, commercial, industrial, godown, Chandigarh area. Jeet Associates Call/ WhatsApp: 96468-09090. (CL23093377)

LOST & FOUND

I, Anil Arora s/o Sham, r/o Flat No. 302, Block No. 42, Heritage City, MG Road Gurgaon 122009 here by lost my property Builder Buyer Agreement and Allotment Letter in name of Anil Arora, Flat No. 302, Block No. 42, Heritage City, MG Road Gurgaon 122009 at Gurugram. If someone found plz contact: # 98107-5659 or email: sharap@mtnrosedel.com (CL23093528)

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Channo, spouse of Kartar Singh resident of Chuharwal, Kapurthala, Punjab-144601 have change my name from Channo to Finno vide Affidavit dated 21 Oct. 2023 before Executive Magistrate Kapurthala. (CL23093300)

DISCLAIMER

The Tribune Trust does not take responsibility for the contents of the advertisements (Display/ Classified) carried in this newspaper. The paper does not endorse the same. Readers are requested to verify the contents on their own before acting there upon.

Gangster Landa, fulcrum of narco-terror network, fomenting trouble in state

At 34, Canada-based terrorist faces 33 cases | 71 associates arrested so far

JUPINDERJIT SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 31

With 33 criminal cases against him at the age of 34, designated terrorist Lakhbir Singh Sandhu, alias Landa, is the fulcrum of narco-terror-gangster network that is run from Canada with the help of Pakistan's ISI to foment trouble in Punjab.

As per the police dossier on him, the focus of Landa's group is on carrying out target killings and attacks on government establishments besides drug smuggling. As many as 71 of Landa's associates have been nabbed by the Punjab Police, making him one of the biggest organisers of crime in the state. From small weapons to rocket launchers and



Lakhbir Singh Sandhu, alias Landa

THE MASTERMIND BEHIND RPG ATTACKS

- Involved in RPG attack on Punjab Police Intelligence HQs in Mohali on May 9, 2022
- IED seized from his two aides by the Haryana STF in Shahabad (Kurukshetra) on August 4, 2022
- Punjab Police arrested 15 others of the module affiliated with Landa and Satbir Singh, alias Satta
- Bid to plant IED in vehicle of Sub-Inspector Dilbag Singh in

Amritsar on August 16, 2022

■ Effected organised killing of a garmentshop owner in Tarn Taran on October 11, 2022

■ Behind RPG attack at Sarhali Kalan police station in Tarn Taran on December 10, 2022

■ In August 2023, NIA special court ordered confiscation of Landa's property

■ In September, NIA declared reward of ₹10 lakh on Landa & ₹5 lakh each on his 3 aides

June 22, 2015. His passport expired in 2020.

Before moving to Canada, he was involved in various cases, including murder, attempt to murder, extortion, kidnapping, arms and drugs smuggling, in Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Moga and Ferozepur districts. Besides, he was booked in Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

He along with Harvinder Singh Sandhu, alias Rinda, is operating narco-terror module. Along with their Indian associates, they both are involved in smuggling and selling narcotics, channelising proceeds of narcotics, raising funds through hawala, and sending arms, ammunition and explosives into Punjab with the intention to revive terrorism.



BIG HAUL The police with the seized drugs in Amritsar on Sunday.

Amritsar cops bust drug arms racket run from US

AMRITSAR, DECEMBER 31

The City police unearthed a

drugs and arms racket being run by USA-based smuggler

Manpreet Singh, alias Manu

Muhawa, with the arrest

of two persons here today.

Around 19 kg heroin, seven

sophisticated weapons and

Rs 23 lakh drug money were

seized from them.

Those arrested were identified as Sandeep Singh, alias Laddi, of Guru Ki Wadali and Roshan of Haer village here. This is one of the major drug seizures in the city area over the past several years.

Amritsar Police Commissioner Gurpreet Singh Bhullar said besides contraband and drug money, the police also seized three .30 bore pistols, three .32 bore pistol, one 9 mm Glock pistol, Pakistan-manufactured ammunition, a cash counting machine and some drone equipment from the accused. A Hyundai Verna car

19 kg heroin, 7 pistols

₹23L seized | 2 arrested

(PB-06-BB-4064) being used to supply the heroin consignment was also impounded.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused were in touch with USA-based smuggler Mannu Muhawa

and were supplying heroin across the state after smuggling it from Pakistan.

Apart from investigating various linkages, the police teams are also trying to ascertain the financial trail," Bhullar said. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abhimanyu Rana said the CIA staff received reliable inputs that some associates of smugglers Mannu Muhawa had received a heroin consignment smuggled from Pakistan and that they were on way to deliver it to their accomplices. —TNS

BSF, cops seize heroin, drone in Tarn Taran

AMRITSAR, DECEMBER 31

The BSF along with the district police police seized a drone and 523 gm heroin from a farm at Mari Kamboke village in the border belt of Tarn Taran today.

According to information, the BSF troops detected and intercepted a drone

from the Pakistan side that violated Indian airspace.

Subsequently, the BSF and the Tarn Taran police launched an intensive search operation that led to the seizure of a Pakistani drone (DJI Mavic 3 Classic, made in China) along with 523 gm heroin from a field. —TNS

Robbers' gang busted in Bathinda, 9 arrested

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

BATHINDA, DECEMBER 31

The Bathinda police have busted a gang whose members would rob passers-by on the main road of the city at night by pretending to seek help.

A total of nine suspects, including five women, have been arrested by the police. The group's women would stand on the main road of the city at night and stop the passing commuters to seek help, after which their associates would show weapons and rob the said passers-by. A case has been registered against the suspects.

A police remand has been obtained for all the suspects from court. Assistant Sub-Inspector Nirmal Singh of the Kotwali police station said the police had received a tip-off that some men and women had formed a gang to rob people.

The women would stand on the road near Government Rajendra College at night and ask for help from pedestrians and commuters passing by.

When an innocent fell into their trap, the male members of the gang would come forward and accuse the victim of molesting the women and threaten to file a case against him.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Nirmal Singh said on the basis of the tip-off, the police laid a trap last night and exposed the gang.

The arrested suspects have been identified as Paramjeet Kaur, Simran Kaur, Priya, Amanpreet Kaur, Ramanpreet Kaur, Amandeep Singh, Lakha Singh, Hrimanshu Chauhan and Yuvraj Sunaria.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Nirmal Singh added.

MODUS OPERANDI OF SUSPECTS

- The women members of the alleged gang would stand on the road near Government Rajendra College at night and ask for help from pedestrians and commuters
- When a victim fell into their trap, the male members of the gang would come forward and accuse the victim of molesting the women and threaten to file a case against him
- They would flaunt their weapons, snatch money from the victim and flee the spot. The police said many people had been targeted by the gang

threaten to file a case against him. They would show them weapons, snatch money from the victim and flee the spot. The police said many people had been targeted by the gang.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Nirmal Singh said on the basis of the tip-off, the police laid a trap last night and exposed the gang.

The arrested suspects have been identified as Paramjeet Kaur, Simran Kaur, Priya, Amanpreet Kaur, Ramanpreet Kaur, Amandeep Singh, Lakha Singh, Hrimanshu Chauhan and Yuvraj Sunaria.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Nirmal Singh added.

AMAN SOOD

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PATIALA, DECEMBER 31

Harcharan Singh Bhullar, a 2007-batch IPS officer, was today appointed as Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Patiala range, following the retirement of Additional DGP, Patiala, Mukhwinder Singh Chhina, an IPS officer of 1997 batch.

The government is yet to name a new officer following Chhina's retirement as the head of the SIT which was formed to probe the drugs case against SAD leader Bikram Majithia.

Talking to The Tribune, Bhullar, who will join his office on Monday, said his priority would be to ensure "more public participation against drugs and illegal activities" and seek cooperation of the people of Patiala, Sangrur, Malerkotla and Barnala for the prevention of drugs and crime.

Periodical meetings of the entire Patiala range would be held for a fortnightly review with special emphasis to hold drug de-addiction camps to save the youth, who have fallen prey to drugs, while legal action would be taken against the drug smugglers and their aides", he stated.

Bhullar said as per the directions of Chief Minister

REVIEW EVERY FORTNIGHT

Review meetings of the entire Patiala range will be held every fortnight. Legal action will be taken against drug smugglers and their aides.

HS Bhullar, DIG, PATIALA RANGE

Bhagwant Mann, intensive monitoring would be conducted by the Patiala Police to curb the spread of crime and drugs. "The police will act as friends of people as they are also part of society. The police will always be at their service to make the district crime and anti-social activities free. Apart from this, the doors of his office are open to the general public and they can also come to him to resolve their problems," he added.

Before this posting, Harcharan Singh Bhullar has earlier served as DIG, PAP, Joint Director, Vigilance Bureau; and SSP, Jagraon (Ludhiana rural), Barnala, Sangrur, Fatehgarh Sahib, Khanna, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and SAS Nagar. A seasoned cop, Bhullar comes with a lot of field experience.

Meanwhile, the government is yet to name new SIT head. In May 2023, the Punjab Government reconstituted the SIT probing a drugs case against Majithia. ADGP Chhina was named head of the SIT in place of DIG Rahul S. The first SIT was led by AIG Balraj Singh, who was replaced by Rahul S after AAP came to power.

However with Chhina's retirement, the Punjab government will now name a senior IPS officer as the new head of the SIT which already has a DIG and a DSP-level officer as its members. This is the third time the SIT will be recast to ensure that a challan is filed.

Earlier

Will provide horticulture implements at cheaper rates from today, says CM

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 31 Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said the state government would offer quality horticulture equipment, fertilisers and pesticides at affordable rates through Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (HPMC) from January 1.

Emphasising the government's commitment, he said the HPMC had reduced its profit margin from 15 per cent to 9 per cent, enabling apple growers to access quality products at more economical prices.

Furthermore, the HPMC has inked 38 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for direct purchases from original manufacturing companies, striving to offer farmers vital items at low rates. "Our government is committed to



TO MODIFY EXISTING SCHEMES

- Chief Minister said his government was aiming to increase the income of horticulturists in the state. The Horticulture Department would suitably modify the existing schemes and make them more effective through appropriate restructuring.
- He said the government made provisions in its first budget for establishing an online system to facilitate procurement of horticulture produce at minimum support price by the HPMC.
- Sukhu assured the growers of introducing universal cartons to streamline the sale of apples in the upcoming season.

« CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu addresses mediapersons in Shimla.

supporting apple growers and the decision to reduce margins reflects our dedication to uplifting the horticultural community and enhancing the economic wellbeing of apple growers in Himachal as our top priority," he said.

He said his government was aiming to increase the income of the horticulturists in the state. The Horticulture

Department would suitably modify the existing schemes and make them more effective through appropriate restructuring, he added.

He said the government made provisions in its first budget for an online system to be established to facilitate procurement of horticulture produce at minimum support price by the HPMC.

He further said that grading/packing houses, CA and cold stores would be set up in association with FPOs in

"This online facility will also be available for booking the CA stores of the HPMC. Apart from the sale of produce from home, the farmers will also be able to book farm equipment and materials sold by HPMC," he said.

He further said that grading/packing houses, CA and cold stores would be set up in association with FPOs in

Bhavanagar in Kinnaur, Sandas near Chirgaon, Anu in Jubbal, Chopal in Shimla, Jabli of Solan district, Sundernagar in Mandi, Duttanagar near Rampur Bushehar and Kharapathar in Shimla.

Looking ahead, he assured the growers that the sale of apple in the upcoming season would be streamlined into universal cartons.

Planting material from Kashmir to be under strict scanner

Horticulture Dept taking steps to detect, prevent spread of Apple Leaf Blotch Miner pest

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

APPLE GROWERS WELCOME MOVE

Ensuring that we get pest and disease-free planting material is the need of the hour. There's a big threat of new diseases entering our orchards if the planting material is not checked for pests, fungal and viral diseases before being planted in the orchards. Harish Chauhan, convener, Sanyukt Kisan Manch

allowed into the state without proper documents and certification," said Senior Plant Protection Officer Kirti Sinha.

"And even if someone manages to sneak in the planting material illegally, it will be destroyed as and when found

by the department. We have made flying squads in each district for this purpose," he said.

According to Sinha, a large amount of planting material comes to the state from Kashmir and the Apple Leaf Blotch Miner pest could easily travel

here with the "illegal planting material". "The pest has caused substantial damage in certain part of Kashmir. It eats up chlorophyll in the leaves. We will ensure no planting material from the affected areas, and without the required documentation and certification is brought into the state," said Sinha.

Wary about the growing number of diseases over the last few years, apple growers have welcomed the move.

"Ensuring that we get pest and disease-free planting material is the need of the hour. There's

a big threat of new diseases entering our orchards if the planting material is not checked for pests, fungal and viral diseases before being planted in the orchards," said Harish Chauhan, convener of the Sanyukt Kisan Manch.

He further said the government and the horticulture department should be equally strict with regard to the planting material coming from

Meanwhile, the department has also urged growers to not buy planting material from nurseries not registered with the department.

Upper Shimla engulfed in smoke amid orchard fires

Set off by apple growers to dispose of garden waste

SUBHASH RAJTA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 31

Rampant orchard fires have left the upper Shimla area under a thick cover of smoke. As the apple growers are burning orchard waste like twigs and leaves, thick plumes of smoke can be seen rising from every nook and corner of the apple belt.

Even as the burning of waste is an annual affair, the situation this time seems to be more serious. "Despite the efforts to dissuade apple growers from burning orchard waste, the fires this time appear to have increased. The situation is similar to what it is in Punjab and Haryana at the time of stubble burning," said Sanjeev Thakur, president of the Chuwara Apple Valley Society, Chirgaon.

"The visibility has dropped significantly due to the thick veil of smoke. We can't see beyond a few hundred metres now," he said.

The surge in the number of fires has come despite the orders from the Rohru SDM that the growers found burning their orchard waste would be penalised under Section 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

"We have already issued notices to growers who set their orchard waste on fire.

They have apologised and have given an undertaking in writing that they wouldn't do it again," said Sunny Sharma, SDM, Rohru.

"However, it's not possible to issue notice to each and every grower as the number is very large. So, we are also focusing on raising awareness against this practice and adverse impact it



Plumes of smoke seen emanating from orchard waste. FILE

CAN'T ISSUE NOTICE TO EVERY GROWER

It's not possible to issue notice to each and every grower as the number is very high. So, we are also focusing on raising awareness against this practice and the adverse impact it will have on our environment and health.

Sunny Sharma, ROHRUSDM

WARNING FAILS TO YIELD RESULTS

The surge in the number of fires has come despite the orders from the Rohru SDM that the growers found burning their orchard waste would be penalised under Section 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Progressive growers feel these fires will adversely affect the micro climate of the area and apple production as the temperature will rise, which will make it tough to get the required chilling hours for apple trees

Bish, president of the Progressive Growers Association.

With awareness drives not yielding the desired results, growers feel that the government and Horticulture Department should offer subsidy on shredding machine. "If the shredder is subsidised, it may encourage the growers to turn waste into manure by composting it," said Thakur.

Thousands throng Shimla to ring in New Year

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

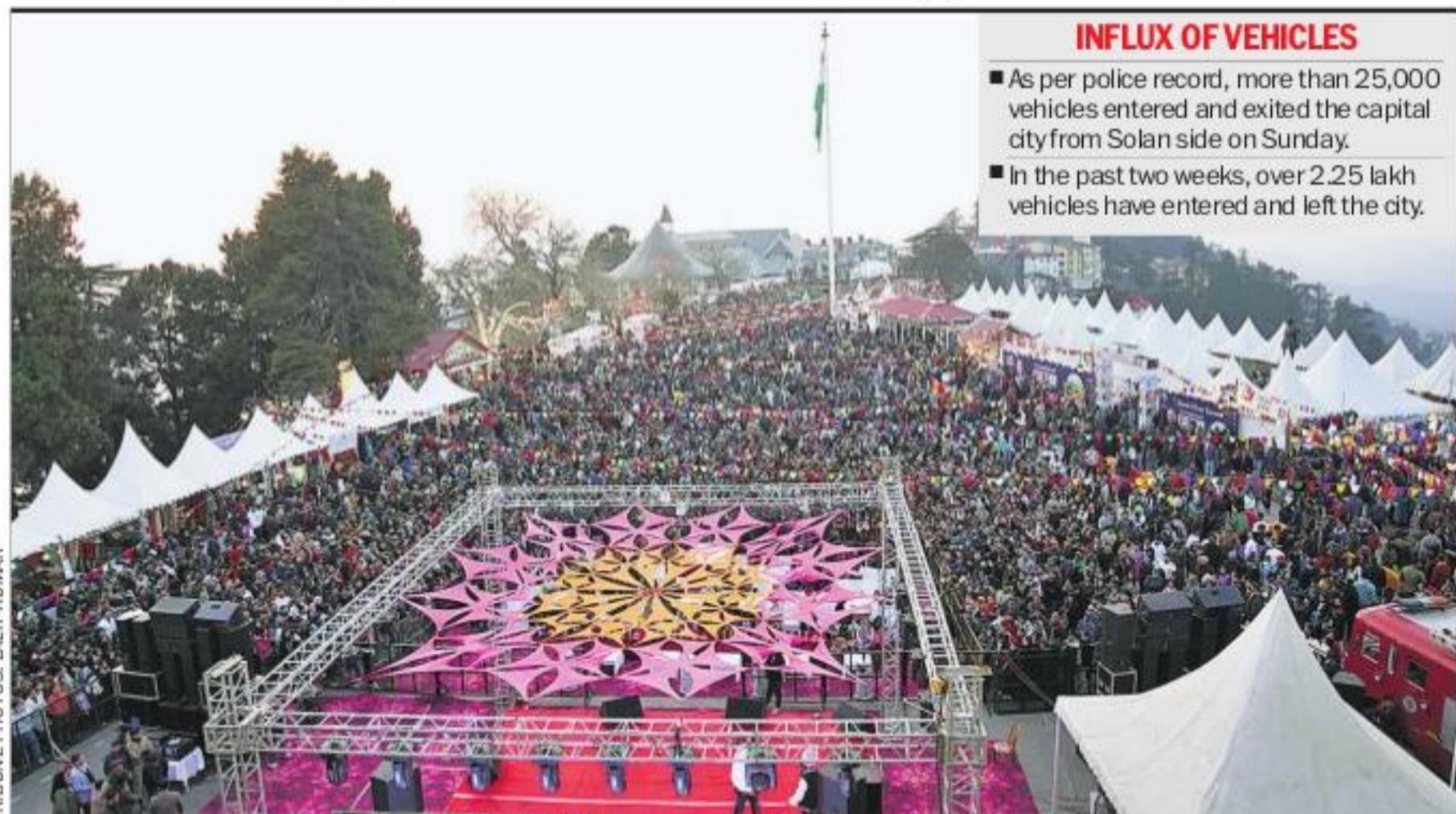
SHIMLA, DECEMBER 31 Thousands of tourists thronged Shimla to ring in the New Year on Sunday. As tourist vehicles kept entering the city till late evening, police personnel were on their toes throughout.

As per police record, more than 25,000 vehicles entered and exited the capital city from Solan side on Sunday. In the past two weeks, more than 2.25 lakh vehicles have entered and left the city. Thousands of tourists, who reached the Mall Road and The Ridge during evening hours, were seen enjoying the Winter Carnival.

In order to manage the traffic movement, the district police have been halting vehicles coming from Solan side to Shimla at the Shoghi barrier for a few minutes. The traffic plan worked well as city did not get choked despite heavy rush, claimed the police authorities.

Superintendent of Police Sanjeev Gandhi said, "We have been managing traffic movement in and out of the city in a regulated manner. It's based on mathematical calculations. Considering the increased number of tourist vehicles entering Shimla for Christmas and New Year celebrations as per the existing road network and available parking capacity (4,500 vehicles), we are halting vehicles for some time near the Shoghi barrier and then releasing them in a regulated manner. It would be absolute chaos if we let all vehicles pass at one go."

Gandhi added, "At 13 bottlenecks, where a multiple dimension vehicular flow is being managed, like the Victory Tunnel, the capacity of disposal of vehicular flow is 35 to 40 vehicles per minute whereas the arrival of vehicles on these points is more than 55 to 60 vehicles per minute. So to equalise this number, Shimla police regulates traffic on the rotation of one minute on temporary hold barriers which are 10 to 15 km outside the city."



A huge rush of tourists on The Ridge; and (below) artistes present folk dance and music during the Winter Carnival in Shimla on Sunday.

GRAND FINALE TO WINTER CARNIVAL

- On the last day of the Shimla Winter Carnival, cultural troupes from Chamba, Shimla, Kullu and Sirmour districts enthralled tourists with their performances.
- The Naag cultural group from Chamba performed Gaddi dance. Artistes also performed Kullavi nati. Punjab's NZCC, Patiala, members performed bhanga.
- A cultural parade with traditional musical instruments was also held.



STUDENTS PERFORM AT GAIETY THEATRE

- Students from various colleges presented plays under Him Yuva Rang Mahotsav at Gaiety Theatre.
- Students of Government Girls College, Shimla, presented play 'Muqaddar ka Sikandar'.

- Students of Government College, Mandi, presented 'Charumitra'.
- Government College, Karsog, students presented 'Fallen Angels' and college students of Seema Rohru presented 'Hamlet'.

GUV EXTENDS WISHES

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla and CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Sunday greeted people on the eve of the New Year. The Governor expressed hope that the New Year would bring abundance of good health and happiness to the lives of the people. Sukhu wished for joy and prosperity to the people in 2024.

Tourists brave biting cold in Manali to welcome 2024

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE



OCCUPANCY LOW, RUE HOTELIERS

- Shimla hoteliers claim that the hotel occupancy rate was just around 60-70 per cent in Shimla on Sunday. "This occupancy rate is quite low, considering it's the last night of the year," said Mohinder Seth, president of the Shimla Hotels and Tourism Stakeholders' Association.
- Seth alleges that the unauthorised homestays and bed and breakfast facilities in and around Shimla are hitting the hoteliers hard. "A large chunk of tourists opt for these accommodations due to lower tariff," he said.
- Hoteliers in Manali were also slightly disappointed as the tourist rush for New Year celebrations was much less as compared to Christmas. Hem Raj Sharma, a hotelier in Manali, said, "Traffic jams in Manali and its surrounding areas were widely reported, which had an adverse impact on tourist arrival."

in Manali to enjoy the Winter Carnival, which will kick start on January 2. "It will be a five-day event, which will conclude on January 6. During the event, different cultural and sports activities will be organised."

CM visits Mall Road, interacts with public

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 31

CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, accompanied by his cabinet colleagues, took a stroll on the Mall Road, Shimla, and extended warm greetings to the public and

tourists on New Year's Eve on Sunday. The CM also visited the Winter Carnival at The Ridge and enjoyed the cultural programme. Sukhu said, "The government was promoting tourism activities in a grand way and organised the Winter Carnival in Shimla for the first time." He thanked the people for their invaluable support during the recent natural calamity in the state. He said that with the collaborative efforts of the people and the state government, Himachal was now ready to welcome tourists.

To fight Naxals, 3,000 CAPF personnel to move from Odisha to Chhattisgarh

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31
Three battalions of the BSF, comprising more than 3,000 personnel, will move across the border from Odisha to Chhattisgarh and an equal number of ITBP units will further move into the Naxal stronghold of Abujhmad as part of a strategy to intensify anti-Maoist operations in their last bastions, official sources said.

The new operational blueprint is part of a plan under which Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently made a declaration that India was "on the verge of" eliminating Left-wing extremism (LWE).

"The last strike against LWE by forces such as the BSF, CRPF and the ITBP is in the process. We are determined to end Naxalism," Shah had said on December 1 in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, while addressing BSF troops on their 59th Raising Day.

Sources in the security establishment said the BSF had been directed to create



ITBP units plan to storm Naxal stronghold of Abujhmad as part of a strategy to eliminate last bastions of insurgents. PTI

six new company operating bases in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district by initially moving one of its battalion based in Odisha's Malkangiri, just across the interstate border.

A BSF battalion has a strength of over 1,000 personnel. The ITBP, which currently has about eight battalions located in Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon and Konda-

gaon districts of Chhattisgarh, has been asked to move one unit further inside the core area of Abujhmad.

This is an about 4,000 sq km forest area in Narayanpur district and considered a stronghold of armed Naxal cadres.

The uncharted Abujhmad or 'madh' forests are host to a population of about 35,000 people, mainly tribals, residing in 237 villages. The area,

at present, has no permanent central or state police base and armed Maoist cadres are stated to be operating, training and moving here from across the Chhattisgarh-Odisha border in the south Bastar region.

The Bastar region comprising districts like Dantewada, Sukma and Bijapur up to Narayanpur and Kondaon, and Kanker district further north is the last bastion and corridor where Maoists have some strength and can spring surprises against the security forces and the administration.

The security forces are building their new strength and infrastructure here to demolish the Maoist network and hold the area so that development works can be initiated by the state government, a senior officer said.

He said two more BSF and ITBP battalions each would be later moved to further dominate the

Chhattisgarh-Odisha border along south Bastar.

A security officer said Naxals were using the Bastar corridor of Chhattisgarh to move back and forth into Odisha districts like Malkangiri, Koraput and Kandhamal and hence the central forces had been tasked with creating more company operating bases or forward operating bases along the border of the two states.

While there are around 800-900 active cadres in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada special zonal committee leadership of the Naxals, the CPI(Maoist) strength in Odisha under the Kandhamal-Kalahandi-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division is depleted with only 242 active cadre, the officer said.

Out of the 242, only 13 are from Odisha while the rest of the senior and middle-rung leadership of the Maoists hail from Chhattisgarh. — PTI

After ULFA, 3 Naga groups unite for talks with Centre

DIMAPUR, DECEMBER 31

Three Naga groups have come together and decided to pursue negotiations for a solution to the decades-old Naga political issue with the Centre jointly.

The decision was taken on Saturday during a meeting attended by leaders of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) led by Akato Chophy, NSCN led by Khango and Z Royim-led Naga National Council (NNC). All three are splinter groups. The pro-talks faction of the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) on Friday signed a peace accord with the Centre and Assam Government.

"The three groups have come together to have a joint political venture in 2024," said Akato, while addressing journalists after the meeting here in the presence of leaders of the other two groups.

Asked if they have already approached the Centre with

JOINT EFFORT

“We have made separate approaches in the past but now we will make a joint effort on the Naga issue.

Akato Chophy, NSCN LEADER

their decision to hold a dialogue, he said, "We have made separate approaches in the past but now we will make a joint effort on the Naga issue."

Akato also affirmed that they would be holding a dialogue separate from the negotiations being held by the working committee of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) with the Centre.

The NNPG is composed of only seven groups while other Naga groups have been left out, he said, announcing that the three groups welcome like-minded organisations to join them for the cause of the Nagas.

Stating that there was no nomenclature for the three

groups who have come together, Akato said they would approach the Centre for political talks.

The Nagaland insurgency is the longest-running conflict in the country. The Centre has been holding separate negotiations with NSCN-IM since 1997 and the NNPGs since 2017.

The NSCN-IM has remained adamant on its demand for a separate flag and constitution for the Nagas as well as integration of Naga-inhabited areas spread over four states of India — Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and Nagaland, and also Myanmar.

On the other hand, the working committee of the NNPGs has expressed its willingness to accept whatever is granted for now and continue with the talks.

Nonetheless, as of now, there is no significant development in the political negotiations between Centre and the Naga groups. — PTI

Derailed



A truck carrying a train coach collides with a railing on Lohia bridge in Bhagalpur, Bihar. PTI

6 killed in Maha factory inferno

MUMBAI, DECEMBER 31
Six workers were killed after a fire broke out in a hand gloves manufacturing factory in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district in the wee hours of Sunday.

The blaze erupted around 1 am in the Sunshine Enterprises unit located in the Waluj industrial area.

Thirteen workers were sleeping on the premises when the incident took place.

Six of them were killed, while the seven others managed to come out by breaking the tin roof of the factory, the official said.

Police Commissioner Manoj Lohiya said, "The fire broke out in the Sunshine Enterprises factory, which makes cotton and leather hand gloves, in Waluj. The police control room came to know about the incident around 1.15 am. After being alerted, the fire brigade rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control around 3.30 am," he said. — PTI

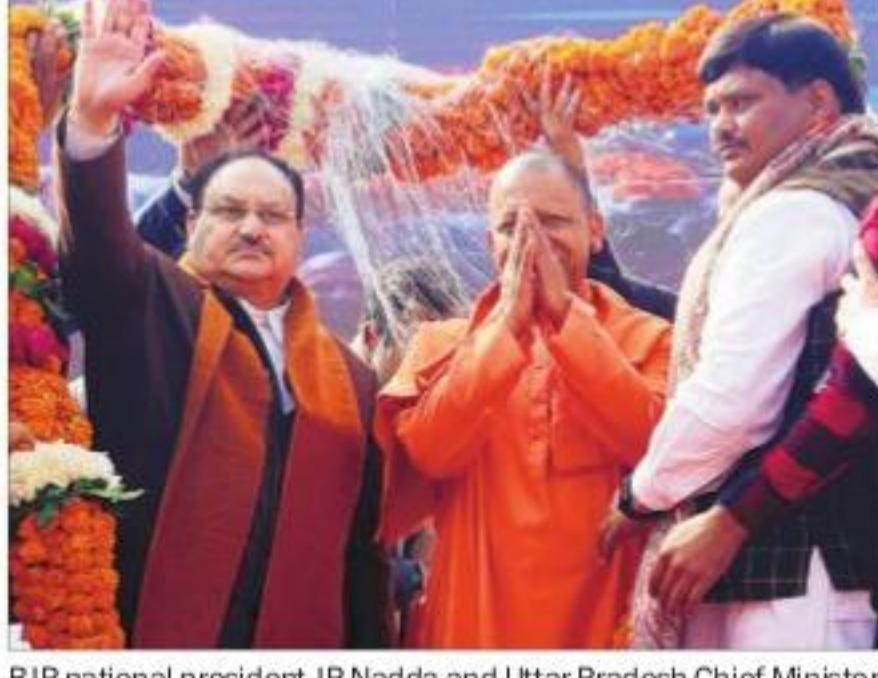
Those who did injustice to society now thinking of 'Nyay Yatra': Nadda

LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 31
Targeting the Congress, BJP president JP Nadda on Sunday said those who spared no effort in doing injustice to society were now thinking about holding a 'Nyay Yatra'.

Addressing a public gathering here, Nadda also hit out at the opposition INDIA bloc, saying it was bent on dragging the country down while Prime Minister Narendra Modi was taking it forward.

Nadda was here to participate in the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra', which aims to spread the word about the central government's flagship schemes ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He also flagged off a half-marathon for women.

Those people who spared no effort to break India over the last so many years had set out on Bharat Jodo Yatra. Those people who spared no effort in doing injustice to society are thinking about holding a 'nyay yatra' these days. Those people who never thought of anyone out-



BJP national president JP Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurate half marathon in Lucknow. ANI

Military exercise 'Desert Cyclone' begins tomorrow

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31
The Joint Military Exercise 'Desert Cyclone 2024' between India and UAE will be held from January 2 to January 15 in Rajasthan.

The joint drills under 'Desert Cyclone 2024' will aim to enhance interoperability by learning and sharing best practices in urban operations.

Taking to its official handle on X, the Indian Army posted, "Exercise #DesertCyclone_2024. The Inaugural edition of Joint Military Exercise #DesertCyclone, between India & the UAE, will be conducted from Jan 2 to 15, 2024, in Rajasthan."

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, potential areas of bilateral cooperation in the defence field are the production and development of defence equipment; joint exercises of armed forces and technical cooperation.

In recent years, bilateral defence cooperation has been strengthened, notably in the field of defence training and supply of defence inventory, besides regular exchange programmes. — PTI

side their family are talking about the country today," the BJP chief said.

Last week, the Congress announced it would hold from January 14 a 'Bharat Nyay Yatra' led by Rahul Gandhi from Manipur to Mumbai, passing through 14 states. The exercise is being seen as the party's attempt to rally support ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Targeting the INDIA bloc, which also includes the Con-

gress, Nadda said the Opposition coalition was working to stop the country's growth.

"On one side, we have Modi ji who is taking the country forward, and on the other we have the INDIA alliance that is bent on stopping the country (from growing). They are competing to drag the country down and we are competing to take India forward under the leadership of PM Modi," he said. — PTI

target such as telecommunications, drinking water, solar power and health.

During his visit to Lakshadweep, Modi will lay the foundation stone of development projects, including the Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Connection project, worth over Rs 1,150 crore.

He will also dedicate to the nation the Low Temperature Thermal Desalination plant at Kadmat, which will produce 1.5 lakh litres of clean drinking water every day. — PTI

During his visit to Lakshadweep, Modi will lay the foundation stone of development projects, including the Kochi-Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Connection project, worth over Rs 1,150 crore.

He will also dedicate to the nation the Low Temperature Thermal Desalination plant at Kadmat, which will produce 1.5 lakh litres of clean drinking water every day. — PTI

CANTONMENT BOARD OFFICE, JALANDHAR

1. The draft regulations for digging and use of bore wells in Jalandhar Cantonment which the Jalandhar Cantonment Board proposes to bring into force by sub-section (4) of Section 204 of the Cantonment Act, 2006 (41 of 2006) is hereby published, as required by sub-section (1) of Section 350 of the Cantonments Act, 2006, for the information of all persons likely to be affected thereby and notice is hereby given that the said draft regulations will be taken into consideration by Cantonment Board, Jalandhar after the expiry of thirty days from the date of publication of this notice.

2. Any objections or suggestions which may be received from any person with respect to the said draft before the expiry of the period of thirty days stated above will be considered by the Jalandhar Cantonment Board.

3. Detailed draft regulations for digging and use of borewells in Jalandhar Cantonment has been uploaded on Jalandhar Cantonment Board website <http://jalandhar.cantn.gov.in> and also placed on the Office Notice Board for perusal of the general public.

4. Any person who intends to file objections/ suggestions in respect of the draft regulations for digging and use of borewells may submit the same in the office of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar in person or through post or by email on 30.12.2023 or before the expiry of a period of thirty days from the date of publication of this notice.

5. The office of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar will consider the objections and suggestions received and take appropriate action.

6. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

7. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

8. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

9. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

10. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

11. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

12. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

13. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

14. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

15. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

16. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

17. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

18. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

19. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

20. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

21. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

22. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

23. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

24. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

25. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

26. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

27. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

28. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

29. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

30. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

31. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

32. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

33. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

34. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

35. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

36. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

37. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

38. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

39. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

40. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

41. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

42. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

43. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

44. The draft regulations will be published in the Office Notice Board of the



GLOBE TROT

A boy takes food at a temporary shelter for people hit by an earthquake at Yangwa village in Jishisha, China. PTI

Death toll in China earthquake rises to 151

BEIJING: The death toll in the 6.2-magnitude earthquake that jolted northwest China on December 18 has risen to 151, official sources said on Sunday. As per the provincial earthquake relief headquarters, the toll rose to 34 in Qinghai on Sunday as the last two persons previously unaccounted for after the earthquake were found dead. The tremor had also killed 117 in Gansu, the local authorities had said on December 22. IANS

Venice to ban large tourist groups, loudspeakers

ROME: Venice, one of the Italy's most picturesque cities, is to ban tourist groups of more than 25 people and loudspeakers from June. The move was announced as use of loudspeakers on tours "can generate confusion and disturbances", a city official said. The official said the latest policies were aimed at improving the management of groups organised in the historic centre. Fearing that tourists could overwhelm the Canal City, residents are choosing to leave. IANS

Snowfall shatters 40-year record in Seoul

SEOUL: South Korean capital Seoul received the maximum single-day snowfall recorded in December for more than 40 years on Saturday. There have been no reports of any weather-related deaths or injuries. The country's weather agency said on Sunday that 12.2 cm of snowfall was recorded in Seoul the previous day, which was the heaviest since 1981. PTI

Top Pak actor calls for release of Indian films

KARACHI: Faysal Quraishi, one of Pakistan's top actors and producers, has advocated for the release of Indian films in the country to revive the local cinema exhibition sector. Quraishi, who has starred in several hit serials and also produced many blockbuster series, said Pakistan needed to lift the ban on screening of Indian films to survive and grow. PTI

At 2L, Lanka sees 'record' tourist arrivals in Dec

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka witnessed "record" tourist arrivals in December this year registering over 2 lakh footfall, highest in past four years, local media reported. Tourism Minister Harin Fernando said total foreign tourist arrivals this year have reached nearly 1.5 million, Daily Mirror reported. It indicates a positive trend in Sri Lanka's tourism industry. IANS

Israeli strikes kill 35 in Gaza as Netanyahu hints at longer war

Former Palestinian minister dies in attack on Al-Maghazi refugee camp

DEIR AL-BALAH, DECEMBER 31

Israeli strikes in central Gaza killed at least 35 people Sunday, hospital officials said, as the military targeted areas in several parts of the territory a day after the country's prime minister said the war will continue for "many more months," resisting international calls for a cease-fire.

The military said Israeli forces were operating in Gaza's second-largest city, Khan Younis, and residents reported strikes in the central part of the tiny enclave, after Israel this week made that region the new focus of its war.

The Ministry of Health in Gaza said a former Minister of Palestinian Authority was killed in an Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip. According to Health Ministry officials, Youssef Salama (68), former Palestinian Authority Minister for Religious Affairs, was



An Israeli mobile artillery unit fires a shell from southern Israel towards the Gaza Strip near the border on Sunday. PTI

NO LET-UP IN OFFENSIVE

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel must maintain open-ended security control over the Gaza Strip. He said the war would continue for many more months. He reiterated his intention to preserve an Israeli military foothold in a narrow strip of land in southern Gaza near the border with Egypt.

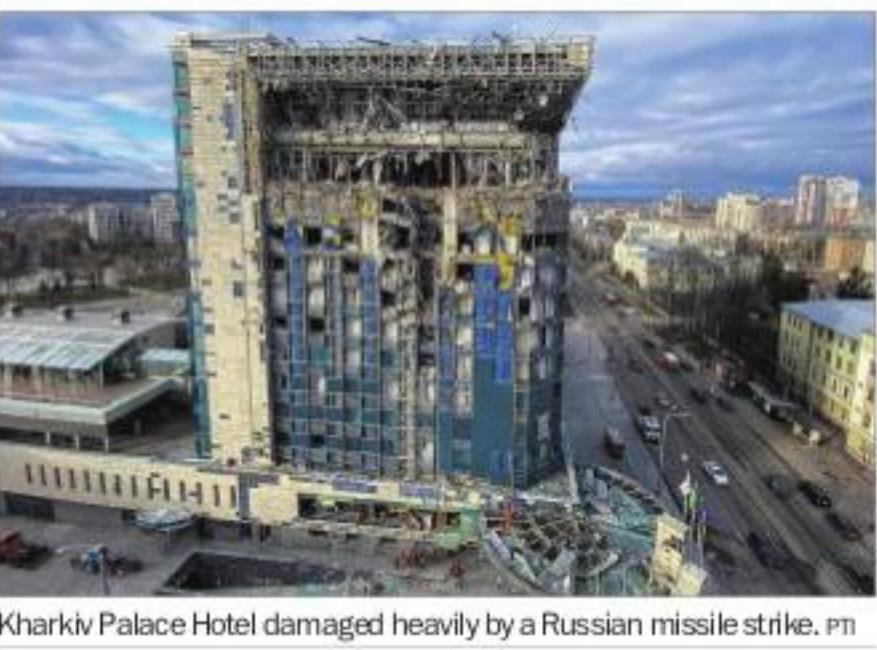
killed in the airstrike at Al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. The war

has sparked a humanitarian crisis, with a quarter of Gaza residents facing starvation.

Israel's bombardments have levelled vast swaths of the territory, making parts uninhabitable and displacing some 85 per cent of Gaza's inhabitants.

Israel expanded its offensive to central Gaza this week, targeting a belt of dense urban neighbourhoods that house refugees from the war surrounding Israel's creation in 1948 and their descendants.

In the area of Zweida in central Gaza, an Israeli airstrike killed 13 people, according to witnesses. The bodies were draped in white plastic and laid out in front of a hospital, where prayers were held before burial. "They were innocent people," said Hussein Siam, whose relatives were among the dead. Officials from Al-Aqsa Hospital in central Deir al-Balah said the 13 were among 35 bodies received on Sunday. —PTI



Kharkiv Palace Hotel damaged heavily by a Russian missile strike. PTI

Russia pounds Kyiv to avenge Belgorod attack

KYIV, DECEMBER 31

Russia launched a fresh drone assault on Ukraine on Saturday night after promising that strikes on the Russian border city of Belgorod earlier in the day "would not go unpunished".

The Ukrainian air force said on Sunday that it had shot down 21 of 49 drones launched by Russian forces overnight.

Twenty-eight persons were wounded in an attack on the eastern city of Kharkiv, regional Governor Oleh Syniehubov

said on Sunday. A central hotel, apartment buildings, kindergarten, shops and administrative buildings sustained damage, according to the regional prosecutor's office.

In the Kyiv region that surrounds the capital, a Russian drone attack caused a fire to break out at a critical infrastructure facility, local officials said.

Power lines and a grain storage facility in the central Ukrainian region of Kirovohrad were damaged by a Russian attack. —Agencies

Kim vows to launch 3 spy satellites in 2024

SEOUL, DECEMBER 31

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to launch three additional military spy satellites, produce more nuclear materials and introduce modern attack drones in 2024, as he called for "overwhelming" war readiness to cope with US-led confrontational moves, state media reported Sunday.

Kim's comments, made during a key ruling Workers' Party meeting to set state goals for next year, suggest he'll intensify a run of weapons tests ahead of the US presidential elections in November. Observers say



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Kim believes a boosted nuclear capability would give him another chance to launch high-stakes summit diplomacy with the US to win sanctions relief if former President Donald Trump returns to the White House. —PTI

As Taiwan Prez nominee defends right to rule, China calls him 'peace destroyer'

TAIPEI, DECEMBER 31

China has slammed Taiwan presidential front-runner William Lai as a "destroyer of peace" following a televised debate on Saturday in which he defended Taiwan's right to rule itself as a democracy.

Chen Binhu, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said Lai's discourse at the debate was "full of confrontational thinking." He said Lai, who currently serves as Taiwan's vice president with the governing Democratic People's Party, is "the instigator of a potential dangerous war in the Taiwan Strait." Taiwan split from China amid



Chinese President Xi Jinping attends a meeting in Beijing. REUTERS

civil war in 1949, but Beijing continues to regard the island of 23 million with its high-tech economy as Chinese territory and has been ramping up its threat to achieve that by military force if necessary.

Lai on Saturday said he was open to holding talks with Beijing "as long as there is equality and dignity on both sides of the Taiwan Strait." He said Taiwan is not subordinate to China. —PTI

After 52 years, Denmark's Queen to abdicate throne

COPENHAGEN, DECEMBER 31

Denmark's Queen Margrethe II will abdicate on January 14 next year after 52 years on the throne and will be succeeded by her eldest son Crown Prince Frederik, she said her annual New Year's speech on Sunday. The 83-year-old queen, who took over the throne in 1972, is the longest-serving monarch in Europe following the death of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022.

"I have decided that now is the right time. On January 14, 2024, 52 years after I succeeded my beloved father — I will step down as queen of Denmark," she said. —PTI

INFOCUS AGRICULTURE

CROP DIVERSIFICATION

Plenty of room for boosting mushroom cultivation

SS CHAHAL

INCREASING farmers' income is an imperative requiring multiple interventions in view of the input-intensive, low-profit agriculture and the diverse pattern of farming in the country. Some alternative agricultural activities are highly productive; they utilise byproducts and employ locally available manpower to operate, manage and maintain production. One such activity is mushroom cultivation, which consumes agricultural residue, including wheat and paddy straw, requires less space/area and has the potential to enhance the income from farming. Even as a freestanding venture, it is potentially a profitable option for small and landless farmers.

Commercial cultivation of mushrooms commenced in India under the patronage of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 1961 in Solan (Himachal Pradesh); it got an impetus with the establishment of the Directorate of Mushroom Research of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR-DMR). The hill town is known as the 'Mushroom City' of India. Four types of mushrooms are mainly grown commercially in the country. White button, a temperate mushroom, has a share of more than 70 per cent. It is also predominant in tropical and sub-tropical regions. Oyster mushroom, with 15-16 per cent share, is grown in the subtropics and northeastern states. Paddy straw mushroom (around 7 per cent) and milky mushroom (3 per cent) are grown seasonally

Fungi family
Mushrooms belong to the group of organisms called fungi. They lack green matter (chlorophyll) present in plants and grow on dead and decaying organic material. From these decaying substrates, they absorb nutrition with the help of fine thread-like structures (mycelium) which penetrate into the substratum and are generally not visible on the surface. After the mycelium has grown profusely and absorbed sufficient food material, it forms the reproductive structure, which generally comes out of the substrate and forms the fruiting body (mushroom). The fruiting body may be umbrella-like or of other shapes, sizes and colours.

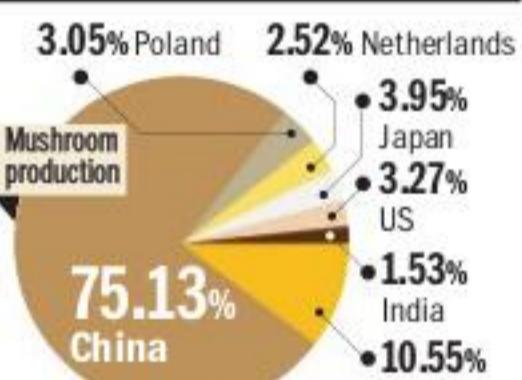
MAJOR MUSHROOM VARIETIES



in tropical and sub-tropical regions. Shiitake, another edible and medicinal mushroom, grown on wood logs, sawdust and corn cobs and supplemented with wheat and rice brawn, is gaining popularity for general cultivation. Mushrooms are now grown in almost all states of India. Haryana, Odisha, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu are the major contributors. Four types of mushrooms are mainly grown commercially in the country. White button, a temperate mushroom, has a share of more than 70 per cent. It is also predominant in tropical and sub-tropical regions. Oyster mushroom, with 15-16 per cent share, is grown in the subtropics and northeastern states. Paddy straw mushroom (around 7 per cent) and milky mushroom (3 per cent) are grown seasonally

Scope for growth

India recorded cumulative aggregate growth rate of 6.15% for mushroom production for 2000-19



COMPONENTS OF A MUSHROOM FARM

- Composting unit
- Outdoor phase I composting platform or indoor bunkers/ aerated chambers
- Indoor phase II in peak heating/bulk past-chamber
- Peak heating chamber
- Bulk pasteurisation chamber
- Cooling of compost in summer months is a special requirement
- Casing pasteurisation chamber
- Spawn unit
- Spawn laboratory
- Cropping unit
- Seasonal cropping rooms
- Environment-controlled

as Europe (1.5-3 kg). To promote mushroom production and consumption, it is necessary to spread awareness among the masses about production technologies and qualitative food status. Many people wrongly consider it as non-vegetarian food.

Mushrooms are highly nutritious and a potential substitute for muscle protein due to their high digestibility. They are packed with vitamins, minerals and fibres, low in calories and sodium and free from fat, cholesterol and gluten, with exceptionally high content of potassium (more than 400 mg per 100 gm) and containing vitamins such as

thiamine, riboflavin, B6 and B12. Mushrooms are the only vegetarian, non-fortified dietary source of vitamin D. A number of bioactive compounds available in mushrooms have immunomodulating properties; they are also effective against tumour growth and are antioxidant, antidiabetic and antiallergic too.

Handling and procurement of spawn required for seeding the substrate are critical for harvesting quality produce. Establishing an ideal spawn production laboratory needs good training, precision and skills with a capital investment of Rs 15-18 lakh, which itself is a profitable, inde-

pendent agri-business activity for educated youths. Seasonal and small-scale growers should procure it from accredited private or government sources. The supply of free or subsidised spawn by government institutes can be of great assistance to rural farmers and bring more into the fold. Setting up own units for raising spawn is viable for round-the-year growers.

The government has permitted the establishment of 'controlled, conditioned' export units which don't face major problems regarding canning, value addition and marketing. But there are limitations for small and rural growers who have to sell it fresh. Because of a very short shelf life of the produce and the absence of refrigerated transport facilities over long distances, they have to explore nearby urban markets. Seasonal production causes over-saturation and sale at unremunerative prices during winter months. Unorganised marketing is a big disadvantage and an impediment to expansion. For efficient marketing, public sector undertakings, organised retailers and grower associations should opt for innovative packaging using environment-friendly biodegradable material under brand names, thus creating an organised distribution network and retail chain system. An estimated loss of up to 25 per cent occurs due to inappropriate post-harvest management practices like harvesting, storage, preservation, processing and marketing, which can be minimised through comprehensive extension activities, organising on-site training programmes for prospective growers round the year and low-cost

polyhouse/greenhouse cultivation. There is a need for policy interventions to encourage mushroom farming as a cottage industry by supporting cooperatives and farmer producer organisations, creating mushroom-specific agencies/boards, instituting centralised procuring and processing units to protect small and scattered growers from a seasonal glut, ensuring price stability, introducing and developing spawn standards, and establishing state-of-the-art compost and spawn centres for the supply of ready-to-use compost and spawn. Aspects like the use of spent substrate as fertiliser and the development of food safety standards for fresh and processed mushrooms also require due attention.

Growing diverse types of mushrooms is preferable to dependence on the white-button type. China is growing about 60 types of mushrooms. India needs to strengthen its research & development programmes for making the most of biodiversity and focusing on improvement using biotechnological tools. Other priorities should include expanding the cultivation base of medicinal mushrooms like lingzhi or reishi and maitake and introducing highly priced specialty gucci. In 2013, an ICAR-constituted research advisory committee made these recommendations. In 2022, the ICAR-DMR announced the development of protocols for successfully producing fruiting bodies of the gucci mushroom. Validation and adoption of such technologies by farmers can be a game-changer for enhancing their income.

The author is ex-VC, Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur



DOUBLE TROUBLE

Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy won their first BWF World Super 1000 title and Asian Games gold. They also became world No. 1 and received the Khel Ratna.



NEXT BIG THING

Antim Panghal became the first Indian woman wrestler to win back-to-back U20 world titles. She also won bronze at the senior Worlds and Asian Games.



BULL'S-EYE

The women's compound team of Parneet Kaur, Aditi Swami and Jyothi Surekha Vennam created history by winning the country's first gold medal in the World Championships. The trio also finished on top at the Asian Games, where Indian archers won five gold medals.



NO SMALL FEET

The first female archer without arms to compete internationally, 16-year-old Sheetal Devi won three medals, including two gold, at the Asian Para Games.



SHOT AT GREATNESS

Sift Kaur Samra broke the world record to win gold in 50m rifle 3 positions at the Asian Games, where Indian shooters had a record haul of 7 gold, 9 silver and 6 bronze.

LOOKING BACK 2023

It was a year of new highs, familiar heartbreaks and a controversy that rocked Indian sports. The year started with top wrestlers accusing the WFI president of sexually harassing female wrestlers. After lengthy protests, the federation was suspended, but even as 2024 arrives, the controversy has refused to die down as the newly-elected body was again suspended by the government. In cricket, the men's team could not end its long wait for an ICC trophy, losing in the WTC and World Cup finals. At the Asian Games, India finished fourth with a record haul of 107 medals. India's para-athletes followed it up with a record-breaking 111 medals.



WAIT CONTINUES

Rohit Sharma's team failed to end India's global title drought stretching back to the 2013 Champions Trophy. India fell to Australia in the finals of the World Test Championship and ODI World Cup.



SERIAL WINNERS

Australia topped India in the final to win the 50-overs World Cup title for the sixth time and cement their status as the most successful team in the tournament's history.



NEW MASTER

Virat Kohli surpassed his idol Sachin Tendulkar to become the first batter to reach 50 ODI hundreds.



SUPER JADEJA

Ravindra Jadeja hit a last-ball four as Chennai Super Kings beat Gujarat Titans in the final to win a record-equalling fifth IPL title.



SOARING HIGHER

Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra became the first Indian to win a World Championships title. He also won the Asian Games gold, with Kishore Jena making it a historic one-two finish for India.



GOAT

Novak Djokovic reached the final of all the Majors and won three to go past Rafa Nadal's 22 and equal Margaret Court's record haul of 24 Grand Slams.



WONDERKID

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa made history by becoming the youngest player to reach the World Cup final. The 18-year-old lost to Norwegian great Magnus Carlsen to win silver and qualify for the 2024 Candidates Tournament.



PEP TALK

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City won the Champions League title for the first time, also completing a famous treble.



GOLDEN BALM

The men's hockey team started the year with a 9th place finish at the World Cup. They bounced back from the heartbreak by reclaiming the Asian Games title and qualifying for the Paris Olympics.



WRESTLEMANIA

Indian wrestling was rocked by sexual harassment allegations and protests against the WFI president, leading to the federation's suspension.

In polly year, SC to give verdicts on electoral bonds, immunity to corrupt lawmakers

SATYA PRAKASH

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31

As India heads to the 2024 General Election, the Supreme Court is set to pronounce verdicts in the new year on several matters of political significance, including the validity of electoral bonds scheme and blanket immunity given to bribe-taker lawmakers under parliamentary privileges.

A five-judge Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud — which on November 2 reserved its verdict on petitions challenging the validity of the electoral bonds scheme — is expected to pronounce it following the reopening of the Supreme

Ties with India improving dynamically, says Putin in New Year's greetings

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31

Russian President Vladimir Putin has conveyed his New Year greetings to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In his message, Putin emphasised that despite challenging global circumstances, the relationship between India and Russia had been progressing



DECISION ON LIFETIME BAN ON TAINTED LEADERS, TOO

Besides delivering the verdicts on the validity of electoral bonds scheme and blanket immunity given to bribe-taker lawmakers under parliamentary privileges, the Supreme Court will also consider the issue of imposing a lifetime ban on tainted leaders from contesting elections.

Court after the winter break.

Introduced through the Finance Act, 2017, an electoral bond is a bearer instrument like a promissory note that can be purchased by an Indian citizen or an Indian company whose identity would remain secret from everybody except the SBI from whom it has to be purchased. Once purchased, the buyer can give it to a political party, which can encash it using its bank account. It was notified on January 2, 2018.

A seven-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI Chandrachud on October 5 reserved verdict on reconsideration of its 1998 judgement, which had held that MPs and MLAs enjoyed immunity from prosecution for taking bribes for "anything said or any vote given" in the House.

Twenty-six years after a five-judge Constitution Bench in PV Narasimha Rao's case ruled that a lawmaker was immune to prosecution even if he/she took money to vote on the floor

of the House, the top court will settle the law on the scope of parliamentary privileges under Article 105(2) and Article 194(2).

The important question of law relating to parliamentary privilege under Article 105 and Article 194 of the Constitution was referred to a five-judge Constitution Bench by a three-judge Bench headed by then CJI Ranjan Gogoi on March 7, 2019, in connection with JMM legislator Sita Soren's plea claiming protection under the top court's ruling in Rao's case after being accused of taking a bribe during a Rajya Sabha election.

A five-judge Constitution Bench — which on December 12 reserved its decision on petitions challenging the validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Amendment Act — would deliver the verdict in 2024.

leaders from contesting elections in the new year.

It will also hear PILs against freebies given by political parties. Acting on advocate Ashwini Kr Upadhyay's PIL, the top court had on August 3, 2022, asked the Centre, Niti Aayog, Finance Commission, Law Commission, RBI and members of ruling and Opposition parties to give constructive suggestions to address the issue of irrational poll-eve freebies to influence the electorate.

A five-judge Constitution Bench — which on December 12 reserved its decision on petitions challenging the validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Amendment Act — would deliver the verdict in 2024.

INS Vikrant equipped with new radar, missile launch platform

AJAY BANERJEE

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31

Indian Navy's first indigenously designed and manufactured aircraft carrier, the INS Vikrant, is back sailing, after completing a mandatory 'guaranteed refit' at the Cochin Shipyard, which originally made the 45,000 tonne warship.

"The sailing is part of the sea trials after the refit," sources said adding that a key addition is the launch platform for medium range surface-to-air missiles — the Barak 8. The carrier has also now been fitted with

Israel-designed MF-STAR (multi-function surveillance, track and guidance radar) — both are crucial as the warship is heading for an operational deployment in January.

The MF-STAR detects airborne threats like aircraft, anti-ship missiles and cruise missiles. The Barak-8 missile can shoot these at ranges of 8 km or more.

In the first week of December, Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, who headed the Southern Naval Command, told reporters in Kochi that Vikrant would be "operationalised" by the end of January 2024. Vice Admiral Hampiholi retired today and is succeeded by Vice Admiral V Srinivas.

The INS Vikrant also has new Commanding Officer Captain Birendra S Bains, assumed command from Capt Vidhyadhar Harke. The mandatory 'guarantee refit' entails repairing, re-equipping, and re-supplying the concerned platform to certify its overall functioning.

The INS Vikrant was commissioned in September 2022. The refit was pre-scheduled to be carried out once the carrier completed its flight trials and fleet integration activities. The carrier showcased its maritime prowess as part of two-carrier battle group operations — with the INS Vikrant and a fleet tanker carrying tonnes of food and fuel for mid-sea replenishment.

Besides own radars, the Vikrant will get feed from satellite Rukmini, surveillance planes like the Boeing P8-I and Drones like the Predator.



A helicopter lands on aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.

MF-STAR RADAR SYSTEM

The indigenously designed and manufactured aircraft carrier is now fitted with an Israel-designed multi-functional MF-STAR radar system and launch platform for medium range surface-to-air missiles — Barak 8.

The Vikrant, once deployed, will lead the carrier battle group at sea. It will expand Indian Navy's arch of 'surveillance', provide more attack options at sea while having the agility to match latest warships. A carrier battle group would comprise the Vikrant, a submarine or two, three or four other warships and a fleet tanker carrying tonnes of food and fuel for mid-sea replenishment.

The INS Vikrant was commissioned in September 2022. The refit was pre-scheduled to be carried out once the carrier completed its flight trials and fleet integration activities. The carrier showcased its maritime prowess as part of two-carrier battle group operations — with the INS Vikrant and a fleet tanker carrying tonnes of food and fuel for mid-sea replenishment.

Besides own radars, the Vikrant will get feed from satellite Rukmini, surveillance planes like the Boeing P8-I and Drones like the Predator.

Rajnath: Developing strong ecosystem of self-reliance

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31

The government is developing a strong base of domestic defence industrial ecosystem to make India a strategic economy, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said today.

He was addressing the 21st convocation ceremony of Tezpur University, Assam.

"The Ministry of Defence

is making all efforts to achieve the target of becoming self-reliant in the sector," he said.

Highlighting the various steps taken by the Ministry of Defence to achieve 'aatmanirbarta' (self-reliance) in defence, Rajnath said the import of arms had been restricted. — TNS

From today, CBSE to offer counselling to students for exam preparation

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 31

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Sunday announced provision of psychological counselling facilities starting from January 1 for students and parents. This initiative is strategically aligned with the already announced exam schedule for practical and theory papers, which commence on January 1 and February 15, respectively.

"The CBSE will provide psychological counselling facility to students and parents from January 1, 2024. The exam schedule for practical and theory papers has already been announced. The psychological counselling has been aligned accordingly for students' facilities," said a CBSE press note.

According to the press note, counselling facilities were as follows: Free IVRS facility will be made available 24x7 for students and parents on board's toll-free number 1800-11-8004. Through this, information and suggestions about stress-free preparation for examinations, time and stress management, frequently asked questions (FAQs), important contact details of CBSE offices, can be accessed in Hindi and English. — ANI

Printed and Published by Rajesh Ramachandran for The Tribune Trust
Printed at The Tribune Press, Plot No. 123, Sector 37, Phase City-1, Gurugram.

Published at The Tribune, Sector 29-C, Chandigarh.

RNI No. CHAENG/2017/72605.

Copyright © The Tribune Trust. All rights reserved.

Telephones: 0124-2210033, 2210044

Circulation: 0172-2670419, Advertisement: 0172-2670256, 257

Editor-in-Chief: Rajesh Ramachandran*

*Editor for purpose of PRB Act, 1967

Printed and Published by Rajesh Ramachandran for The Tribune Trust
Printed at The Tribune Press, Plot No. 123, Sector 37, Phase City-1, Gurugram.

Published at The Tribune, Sector 29-C, Chandigarh.

RNI No. CHAENG/2017/72605.

Copyright © The Tribune Trust. All rights reserved.

Telephones: 0124-2210033, 2210044

Circulation: 0172-2670419, Advertisement: 0172-2670256, 257

Editor-in-Chief: Rajesh Ramachandran*

*Editor for purpose of PRB Act, 1967

Printed and Published by Rajesh Ramachandran for The Tribune Trust
Printed at The Tribune Press, Plot No. 123, Sector 37, Phase City-1, Gurugram.

Published at The Tribune, Sector 29-C, Chandigarh.

RNI No. CHAENG/2017/72605.

Copyright © The Tribune Trust. All rights reserved.

Telephones: 0124-2210033, 2210044

Circulation: 0172-2670419, Advertisement: 0172-2670256, 257

Editor-in-Chief: Rajesh Ramachandran*

*Editor for purpose of PRB Act, 1967

A SYMBOL OF PROMISE. PERFORMANCE. PERFECTION.

THE MRF TREE

MRF

The Masters of Indian Roads

2024 is a new beginning that deserves to be ushered in with a symbol of promise. A symbol that instils in every motorist, the belief that they are driving into a stellar beginning which is what the MRF Tree stands for.

As India's No.1 tyre manufacturer, we assure you, that whatever be the journey you embark upon this new year, we've got the tyres to make it a delightfully comfortable, smooth one.

